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# FENWAY COURT

YYY PUBLISHED BY THE ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM YYY

## PAUL MANSHIP

WHEN PAUL MANSHIP, at the age of twenty-four, was awarded the three-year scholarship to the American Academy in Rome he was already an accomplished sculptor. He had studied modeling and painting in his native city, St. Paul, Minnesota, and after working as a designer and illustrator had attended the Art Students League in New York. As assistant to Solon Borglum and later to Isadore Konti, he had gained excellent practical experience in his craft. At the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Charles Grafly, the master portrait sculptor and modeler, had been his instructor. In addition to these studies he had spent a summer in Spain, travelling mostly on foot. The sculptural traditions reflected in his work were those generally accepted in this country just after the turn of the century. Rodin was a dominant influence. The French master's dramatic, illustrative style and his emphasis upon illusions of light and color in freely modeled forms fascinated most critics and students of the art. But perhaps Meunier more than Rodin especially appealed to the young sculptor.

The mature Manship, returning from Rome in 1912, brought back with him a style of his own that was to make an unprecedented change in American sculpture. Though acclaimed by connoisseurs across the country, its full significance was not grasped at first. For, while delighting in its freshness, gaiety, and grace of composition, most of those who rushed to acquire his work considered it the somewhat archaistic expression of a phenomenally charming and original talent. Possibly no one except the sculptor himself thought of it as the beginning of a revolution.

Though the art of the Italian Renaissance inspired him deeply, the chief influences in his style were the Greek vases seen in Italy and the archaic sculpture which had been the revelation of a brief visit to Greece.



PAUL MANSHIP (American, 1885-1966), *Diana*.  
Bronze. Overall dimensions: 3 ft. 3¼ in. (.995 m.)  
x 2 ft. 2¾ in. (.68 m.). Purchased in 1921. Isabella  
Stewart Gardner Museum.





A little later the Indian sculptors' concern with gesture and decorative detail had a slight echo in his work. But this was no ordinary eclecticism. It was in fact the first noteworthy instance of an American sculptor turning to an earlier, more primitive art for a fresh realization of the properties of his medium, a searching that went far beyond the seemingly superficial. Since that time almost every primitive art from the palaeolithic to that of the African negro has been explored by our sculptors in their quest for a deeper understanding of the true nature of their art.

Before going to Rome, and even during his first year there, Manship's work, like that of all American sculptors of the day, was based upon faithful observation of nature and a treatment of form resulting from the soft material in which he worked — clay and plastiline. With the possible exception of Karl Bitter none had attempted to treat stone as anything but a copy of a clay model, and none had treated bronze as a hard material enhanced by the beauty of chased surfaces. Manship had done this, and his bronzes at the same time suggested in their flow of line the running of molten metal.

The *Diana*, executed in 1920, is possibly the supreme example of the fluidity of line which Manship was able to achieve within the bounds of satisfying sculptural composition by means of perfect balance and counterpoint. It is conceived generally in one plane. Its effectiveness derives from the design of silhouette and open spaces, revealing here his debt to the Greek vase painters. Its lightness takes every advantage of bronze as a medium in contrast to many later works in which the emphasis is on solidity and volume. He had been making sketches for the *Diana* and *Acteon* groups as early as 1917. The final composition was executed in three sizes. In the companion piece *Acteon* is represented just as the goddess is changing him into a fleeing stag about to be killed by his own hounds. *Diana* looks back, releasing an arrow from her bow as if to complete her vengeance.

Manship's fascination with the qualities peculiar to bronze sculpture later led him to model in wax for direct casting into bronze by the *cire perdue* process. He found it a difficult material, but the many small groups and figures on mythological themes produced by this method are among his happiest and most characteristic works.

His concern for the sculptural medium was expressed equally in his work in marble. Even at its most subtle and delicate, as in the exquisite portrait of his three-weeks-old daughter, *Pauline*, it always has a thoroughly glyptic character. As his searching for the true nature of stone sculpture became more profound it was manifested in the emphasis upon volumes, in the expression of their weight, and in great



MANSHIP, *The Rape of Europa*. Bronze plaque. Diameter: 5½ in. (.14 m.). Made for and presented to Mrs. Gardner by the artist in 1917. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.



simplification. Poses became more formalized, figures less organic. In later years he returned to a more direct application of the study of nature. He felt that he had gone too far in the abstraction of certain forms. He spoke often of the "anatomy of drapery" and preferred to base his interpretation of it upon the actuality rather than upon the use of arbitrary or conventionalized forms.

Delight in the medium also inspired unique achievement in medallic art. Following the invention of the Janvier machine for cutting dies from larger models, medallists had departed from the appropriateness of scale that had been imposed upon the ancient die cutters by the exigencies of their materials and tools. Manship revived the clarity of design that had been the charm of the Greek gems and coins. In his medallic work, as in most of his relief, lettering played an important part. For him it was as alive and sensitive a form of design as any other. Youthful experience in sign painting had given him great facility and freedom with it. He loved the "living line" with its apparently accidental irregularities, despising the formal, stereotyped letters that were usually designed in architects' offices.

To Manship the Greek coin and the Renaissance medal of the period of Pisanello represented the perfect examples of medallic craftsmanship. The first had been produced by direct cutting in the die from which the coin was struck, the second by making a wax model which was cast in bronze.

Though the plaque entitled *The Rape of Europa* is a bronze cast, all the forms could have been the result of carving in the mold. The bronze medal of *Jeanne d'Arc* resembles in its treatment the Renaissance cast medal. Actually, both plaque and medal were produced by first making a rough model in plastiline, then a plaster mold in which a good deal of carving was done, then a plaster cast in which corrections were made, and quite possibly several molds and casts, with work on each, before the model was finally ready for the founder. Even when his models were to be reduced mechanically for striking he made them smaller than did other sculptors. This was for the purpose of imposing upon himself the discipline of adapting the detail to the restricted area. The model for the *Jeanne d'Arc* medal, for example, was only six inches in diameter. The effect of technique upon style was a constant concern.

But technique, style and skill do not explain Paul Manship's enormous impact upon the American sculpture of his day. That must be attributed to the unique scope and vitality of his talent. The inspiration that he found in nature underlay everything that he did, as his own words clearly show:





*Jeanne d'Arc*. Bronze medal. Diameter:  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. (.07 m.). Signed: *Paul Manship 1915*. Gift of the artist in 1917. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. (Obverse above; reverse below.)





"Sculpture is but a part of the greater scheme of art — dissociated from Nature, it still must find its rhythms in the organization of natural forms. Architecture and its abstract forms also belong to this large scheme to which the sculptor should devote his studies. But more important than formalities and geometrical considerations is the feeling for human qualities and harmony and movement of life."

The human quality triumphs through all the changes in his work. The fascination of his first exhibition lay largely in the combination of a lively and joyous naturalism with the stylization of anatomy and drapery. As the experiments with his media became more searching, the animating spirit was revealed with ever increasing variety. In addition to the human figure, birds, animals, and plant forms were equally congenial to him, and his application of architectural detail was rich in imagination and unerring in taste. He was perhaps the last American master craftsman in sculpture, equally skilled in every branch of the art from the medal to the monument. Witnesses are the delicate relief of Jeanne d'Arc, the huge stone bears at the Bronx zoo, the portrait in terra cotta of Henry Stimson, and the heroic-scale Prometheus in Rockefeller Center, among hundreds of works in varied media.

During the past half century experiments by sculptors, in which Manship had pioneered, have led far away from the classical tradition which he so cherished. His part in them has been obscured by time. But the contribution that he made to American art is now more deeply appreciated than ever by those who respond to the delight in the beauty of form and life which is so forcefully expressed in all that he produced.

WALKER HANCOCK  
Lanesville, Massachusetts

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## NOTE

This first number of *Fenway Court* marks a change from the former *Calendar of Scheduled Events* which was issued weekly during eleven months of the past nine years. The form of that more frequent publication did not allow space for illustrations adequate to a presentation of objects in the collection. The present periodical is not expected to provide a vehicle for writings of a general nature in the arts but rather to permit additions to information and comment concerning many kinds of works in the Gardner Museum. It is planned for printing in some eight numbers a year. Programs of music are printed and mailed separately.

Walker Hancock (b. 1901), author of the first article, is a sculptor known for monumental works in America and for portraits and medals. He was a friend of the late Paulanship, a neighbor, and a relation by marriage.

## MUSIC

16 OCTOBER — The Cantata Singers and Ensemble

18 OCTOBER — Jewelle Anderson, soprano

20 OCTOBER — Sam Lancaster, piano

22 OCTOBER — Ivan Oak, lyric tenor

23 OCTOBER — Francis Heilbut, piano

25 OCTOBER — Yee Ha Chiu, piano

27 OCTOBER — Barr Peterson, bass

29 OCTOBER — Marsha Vleck, soprano

30 OCTOBER — Nancy Cirillo, violin; Mitchell Andrews, piano

1 NOVEMBER — Izidorius Vasyliunas, violin; Rev. William Wolkovich,  
violin, Vytenis M. Vasyliunas, piano

3 NOVEMBER — Spring Fairbank, soprano  
and at 8:45 — Oswald, violin, Robert Coleman, viola,  
Bruno Di Cecco, cello

5 NOVEMBER — Peter Zazofsky, violin

6 NOVEMBER — George Zazofsky, violin; Newton Wayland, piano

8 NOVEMBER — Kaestner Robertson, piano

10 NOVEMBER — to be announced

12 NOVEMBER — Baroque Ensemble

13 NOVEMBER — Flore Wend, soprano

15 NOVEMBER — Carolyn Friguglietti





# FENWAY COURT

YYY PUBLISHED BY THE ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM YYY

## REPAIR IN RETROSPECT

THE SIMPLE CHEST, a box with a lid, may rank as the earliest piece of furniture to have been made. By historic times, in ancient Egypt and in other parts of the world, it had engaged the services of artists and artisans for carving the wood, for laying on metal leaf, and for painting. In Europe during the fifteenth century prosperous families commissioned celebrated sculptors and painters to ply their skills in the design of such boxes or coffers. Elaborate figures and representations went into and onto the surfaces. Many products of those workshops can be seen in the Gardner collection. In some, only the front panel remains.

The Italian name, *cassone* (plural, *cassoni*), for this kind of furniture, has become common in English usage. The front portions of two *cassoni* are framed on the east wall of the Early Italian Room, wooden panels painted in color in tempera to convey a combined illustration of the poem *The Triumphs* (*Trionfi*) written in Italian by Petrarch (1304-1374). To the left of the door is the panel of the Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death; to the right is that of the Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Eternity. The two are about the same in size: 16½ by 61 inches (0.42 by 1.55 m.) for an average. Measures of the supports out of their frames give somewhat larger figures, more nearly 0.45 by 1.58 m. They probably came from a pair of chests recorded in 1492 as having representations of the Triumphs of Petrarch. These were among the contents of what was then the Palazzo Medici and were in the bedchamber of Lorenzo. A fair assumption has them made for the marriage of Lorenzo's father, Piero de' Medici, with Lucrezia Tornabuoni shortly before 1450. The inventory naturally leaves out the name of the man who painted them but authorities seem to be agreed that they are the work of Francesco di Stefano, nicknamed Pesellino, a Florentine (1422-1457). At one time they had been ascribed to Piero di Cosimo.



Paintings from the front panels of a pair of chests in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum are ascribed to PESELLINO who was active in Florence around the middle of the fifteenth century. They illustrate a poem by Petrarch and represent *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death* and *The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Eternity*.



After 1492 and before the middle of the last century, these front panels had been taken from the chests and henceforth were treated as pictures. They were in British private collections for at least a hundred years until Mrs. Gardner bought them in 1897. A piece of furniture in regular use takes much more damage than an altarpiece. Most fronts of chests show a particular set of marks, dents, abrasions, and speckled losses of paint, in a quadrant below the center of the upper edge. There, heavy keys from a bunch struck them when the cassone was unlocked. Usually, also, a general abrasion of the paint is extensive probably because of frequent dusting and cleaning. Standard practice in the past was to paint over all blemishes and to smooth the appearance with a brown tone of paint or stain followed by a liberal coating of varnish.

By 1934 another defect had become a threat to the safekeeping of the cassone panels in the Gardner Museum, mainly to that of Fame, Time, and Eternity. Near the middle, in an area about 10 cm. high and across most of the width, the ground was loosened from the wood underneath. Pockets of the cleavage were large and they incurred the risk of dislodgement and loss of the paint over them. Examination indicated the leading cause: almost complete destruction of the wooden support along this horizontal zone. The panels are about 35 mm. thick, nearly an inch and a half. Each is of two long planks joined edge-to-edge near the middle. Damage to the wood was on both sides of the join and was typical of the inroads of the so-called "wood worm," the larva of a beetle. The most common of these insects to infest old wood is the *Anobium punctatum*. In summer the mature insects crawl out of the small holes they have made in the wood. They mate and the female hunts for a crevice in which to lay eggs. The join of this cassone panel at the reverse seems to have been suitable. The other may have provided no opening and so has survived with only negligible damage. When the eggs have hatched, the young larvae eat their way into the wood where they are to live for most of a year. They consume a quantity of fibres and leave tunnels containing only their excrement.

In the panel of Fame, Time, and Eternity a region almost two inches on either side of the horizontal join was like a honeycomb over which layers of ground and paint practically spanned a void. Hazard to those layers was increased by a heavy coating of resinous varnish which had become very brittle. Any unusual stress or impact might have knocked out the paint. Wood substance in most of the other areas was firm and the bond of ground to support seemed adequate. A slight, convex warp had developed in both panels, for the reverse had no coating to balance that of the obverse; distortion, however, was hardly more than a centimeter at most and could be accepted as negligible.





Small areas from the panel of *Fame, Time, and Eternity* indicate damage to the original paint and the losses incurred.



Compensation of losses in the paint was confined to areas of loss where the tones needed could be clearly established from those adjacent.



The first step towards a tolerable state of conservation was removal by solvents of the heavy and embrittled varnish. Exposed then was an irregular patchwork of overpaint and a thin, dark layer which had evidently been put on that and on the original paint to effect a uniform tone. A facing was attached in order to hold the paint and the ground intact. At the back the larva-tunneled and dessicated wood was cut out. The largest loss of it was found to be near the ground. Excavation and the subsequent rebuilding were carried out in sections to avoid strain on the main bulk of the panel. Materials encountered during the repair conformed in appearance and behavior to those that are usual for the time and the locality. Analytical identification could be regarded as academic and as superfluous at the moment. The support was a hardwood like that of a fruit tree; the ground had the characteristics of the customary gesso, gypsum with a binder of animal-tissue size and with strips of fabric laid into it along the join. Those pieces had furnished a kind of bridge and evidently had prevented large losses of paint.

Larvae rarely if ever infest painted panels in northern regions of the United States. These works of the fifteenth century carried only the destructive consequences of an earlier invasion. As a precaution, however, when the remaining fragments had been taken out, the opened cavities were soaked with insecticide. A mixture of beeswax and dammar resin was melted into the firm substance of the support around them. Overlapping pieces of knotted gauze, in two layers, were pressed into the same molten adhesive. Before that, the surface of the cavity had been smoothed where necessary with a kind of putty made of shredded cork and chopped hemp bound by the thermoplastic wax-resin mixture. The same putty-like combination was used later around the blocks of the fill; it had strong adhesion and hardened by cooling without loss of volume. The blocks were strips of balsa with gauze between; all held, of course, by the wax-resin adhesive with the fibrous addition wherever that was needed for solidity. Balsa is a tree (*Ochroma pyramidale*) which is a native of the tropical regions of South and Central America and of the West Indies. Its advantage for such a fill is an extreme lightness and resiliency which keeps it from putting strain on the old wood adjacent.

When the fills were finished at the reverse, the facing over the obverse was removed. For both panels the next step in repair was about the same: removal of former overpaint and of the brown paint-stain. These were very tenacious. Parts could be dissolved. More heavily pigmented films were taken off with instruments. Intermittently during this procedure, observations were made by filtered ultra-violet light which, through fluorescence, yielded sharp contrasts between original and later coatings. Dark stain could not be extracted entirely from much

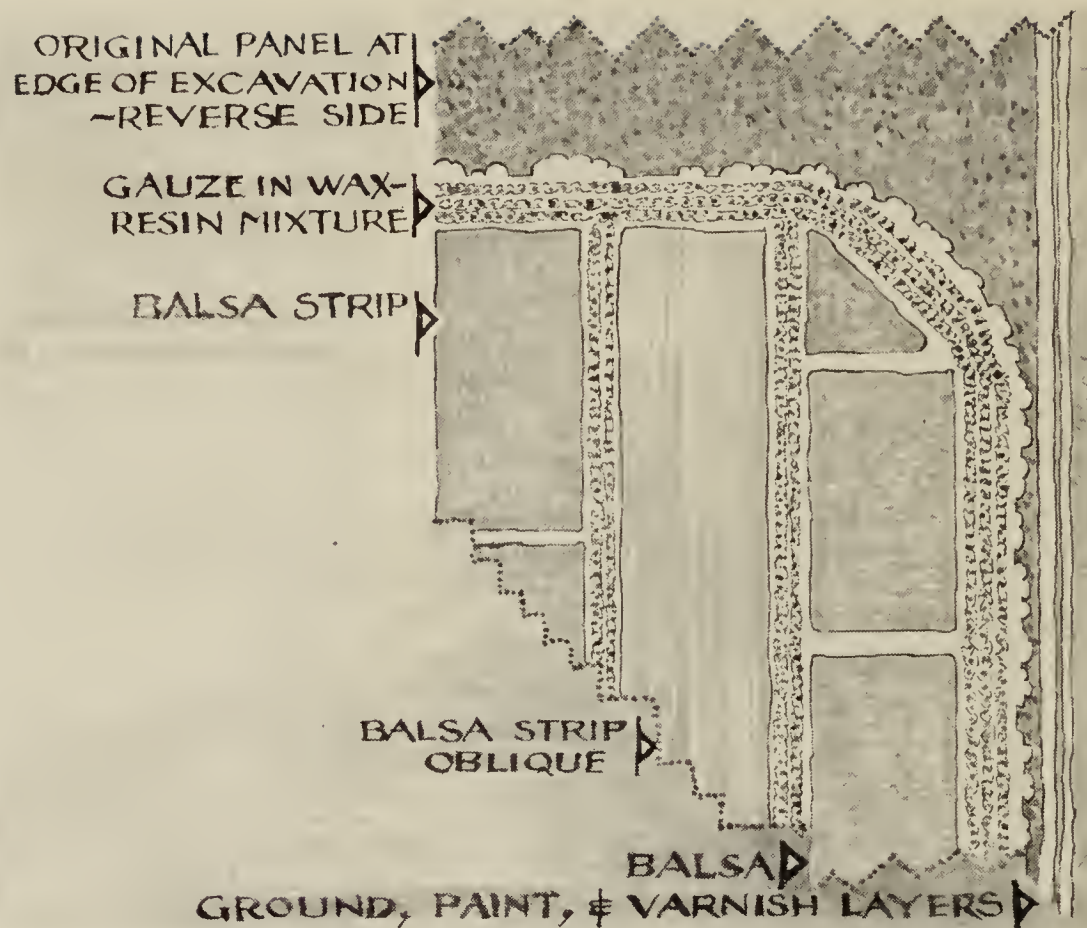


Diagram of a cross section of a portion of the fill used to replace worm-eaten wood in the cassone panel painting of *Pesellino, The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Eternity*. (ISGM.) The balsa strips near the ground-paint layers and at the back are parallel in grain direction to that in the old wood of the support.

of the sky because the granular and absorbent paint there had been soaked through with it. After later additions had been cleared as well as possible, a battered, scratched, rubbed, and rather disfigured pair of pictures was exposed. The condition seemed less than acceptable.

Arguments about compensating for losses in works of art have been countless and often vehement. Such compensation, or restoration, or reconstruction, has been questioned as to propriety, validity, and even morality. When the polemic has been sifted, a few principles are left free of violent contention: if any reconstruction can be judged advisable, those portions introduced are kept strictly within the areas where the original work is lost and gone; and those portions introduced are subject to a removal which will not impose a risk of damage to the original work. In practice most of the debate and dogma drop out of sight and decision as to procedure comes down to a simple and yet very difficult question: what can be done to reclaim, in greatest attainable measure, the integrity and character of a particular object? For the pair of cassone panels in the Early Italian Room the answer reached was replacement



of lost paint as much as clear evidence for it lay in the adjacent original paint. That was done deliberately. Where evidence was lacking, an area had to be left in a fragmentary state.

A surface coating, over the original paint and the compensation, became the final requirement, to ward off air-borne grime and to serve as a protective film in many ways. The traditional application, a dissolved resin or resins known as varnish, had proved itself detrimental both mechanically and visually. In place of it the material accepted for the coating was polymerized vinyl acetate, known as a plastic and available since about 1925. In solution it was put on and allowed to dry thoroughly. Upon it was put a layer of hard wax in emulsion. The under film was clear and its known properties gave promise of continued clarity. It was, however, a rather porous, permeable layer. The wax provided a much more impervious seal. It could be removed without disturbance of the vinyl acetate underneath just as that in turn could be removed without disturbance of the paint.

The repair was finished more than thirty years ago. Choice of materials in the treatment of works of art rides on confidence. For these painted panels confidence was greater in relatively untried materials which had known ingredients and tested properties than in those rather variable materials used over many years past and found to be less than satisfactory. Now, enough time has gone by to confirm the choices, particularly that of a light-weight, resilient fill in cavities of wood, and that of polymerized vinyl acetate as a surface coating when surmounted by hard wax.

G. L. S.

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## MUSIC

Programs are scheduled for the Museum's open days: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Except for the evening of the First Thursday of the month concerts are at three o'clock.

- 1 DECEMBER — Bruno DiCecco, cello; Leonard Seeber, piano  
*Evening at 8:45* — (same as above but different program)
- 3 DECEMBER — Gail Nelson, soprano; Allan Morgan, piano
- 4 DECEMBER — Radcliffe Freshman Chorus; Harvard Freshman Glee Club
- 6 DECEMBER — John Miller, bassoon; Newton Wayland, piano
- 8 DECEMBER — Kaestner Robertson, piano
- 10 DECEMBER — Deborah and Willa Moriarty, piano four hands
- 11 DECEMBER — Virginia Eskin, piano
- 13 DECEMBER — Sandra Thidemann, piano
- 15 DECEMBER — Mary Lou Cirella, soprano
- 17 DECEMBER — Ivan Oak, tenor
- 18 DECEMBER — Igor Kipnis, harpsichord
- 20 DECEMBER — Robert Goepfert, piano
- 22 DECEMBER — Elizabeth Dobbs Epstein, soprano
- 24 DECEMBER — Jane Struss, contralto
- 25 DECEMBER — Holiday
- 27 DECEMBER — Afrika Hayes Lambe, soprano
- 29 DECEMBER — Jerry Grossman, cello; Orin Grossman, piano
- 31 DECEMBER — Jean Lunn, soprano
- 1 JANUARY — Holiday
- 3 JANUARY — Edwin Hymovitz, piano
- 5 JANUARY — Andrew Wolf, piano  
*Evening at 8:45* — Songs by Felix Wolfes, with Felix Wolfes at the piano
- 7 JANUARY — Henny Rauestein, violin
- 8 JANUARY — Robert Martin, cello
- 10 JANUARY — Mildred Armstrong, soprano
- 12 JANUARY — Jean Lee, piano
- 14 JANUARY — William McKim, piano
- 15 JANUARY — Murray Perahia, piano
- 17 JANUARY — Roger Childs, dramatic tenor
- 19 JANUARY — Mary Munn, piano
- 21 JANUARY — Elizabeth Adams, clarinet; Jay Humeston, cello





# FENWAY COURT

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## A PORTRAIT OF BANDINELLI

THE SELF-PORTRAIT of the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli (1488-1559) in the Titian Room has for years brought forth speculation and new attributions, none of which has received general agreement among scholars. Chronologically, it is among the last Florentine paintings in the collection and represents that school of painting called "Mannerism" which dominated the art of Central Italy during the years of the counter-reformation. Recent interest in the painters of the school has raised reputations of long neglected artists and done much for the cataloguing and understanding of their work. When purchased by Mrs. Gardner in 1898, this self-portrait of Bandinelli was called a portrait of Michelangelo by his friend, the Venetian painter Sebastiano del Piombo, the label it had during the nineteenth century in private collections in England. In the eighteenth century there was an obscure reference to it in a private collection in Florence. It was called "a portrait of Bandinelli" by the Florentine Francesco Salviati (1510-1563). Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard correctly reidentified the sitter in 1903 and Philip Hendy in the *Catalogue of Exhibited Drawings and Paintings* (published by the Trustees, Boston, 1931) entered it as a self-portrait.

That this had been regarded as a portrait of Michelangelo was, in retrospect, strange, even ironic. Bandinelli's life is perhaps better known to us than almost any of his contemporaries and he left a number of portraits of himself which serve to identify him and establish his age at the time that the Gardner portrait was painted. His career began as a shop boy for his father, a goldsmith who had served Lorenzo de' Medici. The story is told that while still a child he made a recumbent giant out of snow and soon showed so great an interest in sculpture that his father placed him under the sculptor Rustici. Here he was exposed to the work of Leonardo da Vinci either directly or through his master, and



Self Portrait in the Gardner Museum. Oil on panel 58 x 44¼ inches (1.47 x 1.12 meters) including a strip about three inches wide added to the bottom. The clothing is blue-black and the stone terra-cotta in color. The paint layer is thin to moderate with evidence of general overall flaking in the past.



perhaps influenced against Michelangelo, whose very existence was a life-long source of bitterness to the ambitious Bandinelli. Trading on his father's reputation, he introduced himself to Pope Leo X and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici after the return of the Medici Government in 1512. He presented a wax figure of S. Jerome to Cardinal Giulio and received a commission for a S. Peter for the Duomo. For the Pope's entry into Florence in 1515, he was commissioned to erect a Hercules of nine and a half braccia. Following Giulio to Rome, he created two giants which stand today at the entrance to the Villa which the Cardinal occupied. For Giulio's coronation as Clement VII in 1523 he was summoned to work on the decorations, and in the following years made a copy of the Roman group, the Laocoön, which had been unearthed in the early years of the century. This so satisfied the Pope that he presented Baccio with the knighthood of the Order of S. Pietro.

This was followed by an important commission and one which must have delighted the sculptor, the commission for a Hercules and Cacus to stand in the main Piazza in Florence where Donatello and Michelangelo were already represented. Michelangelo's David had been placed in front of the Palazzo Vecchio in 1504. The republican government had asked him to do a companion piece to be placed on the other side of the main entrance, but service to Pope Julius II had kept him from it. Now Clement gave the commission to Bandinelli, perhaps fearing that a work by Michelangelo would stir the Florentine spirit of independence, or, more likely, because Michelangelo's work on the Medici tombs in S. Lorenzo was unfinished. When the Medici were again driven from Florence in 1527 Michelangelo reclaimed the commission while Bandinelli fled in fear. In Bologna he joined the Pope and Emperor Charles V; in Genoa, from the Emperor, he had received the knighthood of S. Iago, the cross on a cockle shell he is seen wearing in the Gardner portrait. With the restitution of the Medici in Florence in 1530, the Pope ordered him to complete the Hercules group and it was placed in front of the Palazzo in 1534. In the painting, he points to a drawing in sanguine of the same subject, but very different from the finished work.

One difficulty in considering this a self-portrait is that it is the only painting of Bandinelli's that can be found. (A picture, now lost, was reproduced in an auction catalogue of 1907, and identified in 1961 as Bandinelli's work from the photograph.) Vasari's *Lives*, in which the second longest entry is on Bandinelli, tells how he appealed to Andrea del Sarto for instruction only to be tricked by him. He did receive help from Rosso Fiorentino. Works in oil and commissions received for frescos are reported from the years prior to the completion of his Hercules and Cacus. The generally unfavorable comment he received, in-





Portrait of Bandinelli engraved by Niccolò della Casa. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Washington Irving Jenkins Bequest.

cluding Michelangelo's, brought him to abandon painting altogether according to Vasari. If this is true, then this painting would date from just after he received the knighthood of S. Iago, roughly 1530. There are, however, strong reasons for a later date. First there is the three-quarter length portrait of him in the Corsini Gallery, Rome, dated 1540 in which he appears younger than in the Gardner portrait. In it he holds a medal of Clement VII, perhaps to call attention to the commission he





Drawing in pen and ink of a prophet or apostle by Bandinelli. Reproduced by the courtesy of the Trustees of The British Museum.

had received after some persistence from the heirs of the Medici Popes for the tombs of Leo X and Clement VII in S. Maria sopra Minerva. He was occupied there between 1536-1539 and left, as was often the case, before the work was completed. Back in Florence he was employed by his last patron, Duke Cosimo de' Medici, to create a monument to the Duke's father, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, and in 1542 to create an audience chamber in the Palazzo Vecchio filled with figures of the Medici





Marble relief of S. Giovanni Evangelista by Bandinelli. Church of Sant' Ansano, Florence. (photograph by Alinari)



great. He was placed in charge of the workmen in the Opera del Duomo who carved the marble for all the city's public works. In 1547, with work still to be done in the Palazzo, he persuaded the Duke to let him reconstruct the choir rail for the Duomo with some forty figures of Saints and Prophets in marble relief and place figures in the round on a new altar. This was, unquestionably, the most important period of his life. In an engraving of him from this time by Niccolò della Casa, reproduced here, he appears more careworn than in the Gardner portrait; yet in another engraving by Salamanca, dated at the bottom 1548, he seems of no greater age. In both, interestingly enough, he wears the cross of S. Iago and presents a figure of Hercules as in the museum's portrait as though he wishes to be remembered by these symbols. Certainly the designs for these engravings were Bandinelli's although his drawings, which survive in great number, do not include them.

These drawings and his work in bas-relief, a form early abandoned by Michelangelo, provide an insight into the changes in Bandinelli's style. His success with large pieces of marble was limited. Wavering between efforts to recreate classic sculpture and the influence of Donatello, he ended by producing rigid, formal pieces, geometric to the point of dullness, and untouched by the experiments going on around him. In his drawings and work in bas-relief his awareness of the changes taking place in painting can be seen. The drawings of this period are marked by a new, flatter perspective. The depth has diminished to a point where the figures appear to be falling out of the frames. Compositions, previously open, are now contained, and are marked by large areas of light and shade. Whereas before movement was implied by contorting the figure and arms straining away, the outline is now tighter, giving a solid, almost heavy feeling, and with it a sense of quiet. Something of the rhythm of line he observed on the sarcophagi in Rome (for this was a period in which the antique was too-truthfully imitated) and used on reliefs for the Medici tombs, carries over in his work for the choir rail. A drawing of a prophet or apostle in the British Museum, shown here, is an example of these characteristics which may be seen in the work of the Mannerists and appear in the portrait in question.

Another comparison may be made with a bas-relief, shown here, which has been dated 1543. It is in the Church of Sant' Ansano, Florence, and the face of S. John, a self-portrait of Bandinelli, bears the closest resemblance to the face in the Gardner portrait. The design was used with modification in the choir rail. In both works the frame crowds in on the figure, the pose is insecure, and the garment with its heavy folds is treated in sweeping outlines, suggesting that the design of both was from the same period and by the same hand. This would mean that

Bandinelli was in his fifties at the time the Gardner portrait was painted.

At this, the height of Bandinelli's career, Benvenuto Cellini returned from France. His autobiography lends credence to the Vasari account of Bandinelli as a conniving, egotistical man. Cellini complained that he could find no assistants because Bandinelli had employed all the shop boys in Florence. Other records show that a number of good artists were apprenticed in his shop. One wonders if the actual painting of the Gardner portrait was carried out by an assistant following the master's design, as was the case with two pictures in the Pitti Palace, Florence, executed by Andrea del Minga after 1550. Without further evidence it is impossible to suggest more.

The work in the Duomo was the last important commission he received. Like Cellini, other younger artists, equally loyal and outspoken, vied for the Duke's favor. Bandinelli, who had more than enough to do, was slow in meeting his promises. Anxious to remain foremost in the Duke's mind he designed, in the first years of the next decade, a fountain to be placed in the Piazza in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, then the Ducal Palace. Cellini speaks of the way in which he and other artists persuaded the Duke to open the fountain commission to competition which was won by the Roman, Ammanati. In 1555 Bandinelli's position was further eroded when renovation and decoration of the Palazzo was placed in the hands of Vasari. In his last years, he turned to the consideration of his own tomb, a fact which applied to Cellini and Michelangelo as well. An illegitimate son, Clemente, had died in Rome in 1554 and left in an unfinished state a Pietà, Nicodemus supporting the dead Christ. Baccio completed the work and it was placed on his tomb in a chapel of the church of the Annunziata. The face of Nicodemus was his last self-portrait.

R. HADLEY

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# FENWAY COURT

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## ITALIAN RENAISSANCE MEDALS

THE GARDNER MUSEUM is very fortunate in having four important medals of the Italian Renaissance. Displayed in a case in the Early Italian Room, all are of remarkable quality and great rarity. Three of them are by Pisanello and the fourth by Matteo de' Pasti. The Matteo de' Pasti was acquired by Mrs. Gardner from a private source in 1893: the three Pisanellos were acquired from the Spitzer collection in the same year.

Like so much of the art of the Renaissance, whether literary or artistic, the striking of medals was a revival of the antique. Roman medals were issued to commemorate an event or person of importance. Renaissance medals were issued for the same purpose. The one important difference is that medals in Roman times were issued only by the state. In Renaissance Italy they were often issued by private individuals or petty tyrants.

In the fifteenth century medals were cast by the artist himself from a mold of his design. Once cast, they were reworked by hand by the artist. Sometimes they were cast in lead, occasionally in precious metals, but most often in bronze. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the slow and personal method of production had been largely replaced by die casting. As a result the craft declined in quality and originality.

Antonio Pisano, called Pisanello, was born in Pisa. His birthdate was unknown, but in 1395 he was in Verona. His mother was Veronese and he became a Veronese citizen. Schooled by Gentile da Fabriano, he later became Gentile's collaborator. Certainly he was one of the most famous and sought after painters of his day and was one of the finest of Renaissance draughtsmen. He did not turn his attention to medal production until the middle of his career. His first medal, and often assumed to be the first Renaissance medal, was made to commemorate the visit of the Byzantine



Pisanello. Niccolò Piccinino. Obverse above, reverse below.  
Diam.  $3\frac{5}{16}$  in. (.085 m.).





Emperor John VIII Paleologus to Italy in 1438, a visit which temporarily healed the schism of the Eastern and Western Churches. One of the most peripatetic of artists, Pisanello worked in Verona, Venice, Florence, Rome, Ferrara, Milan, Rimini and elsewhere. The last five years of his life are obscure, but it is known that he died in 1450.

All the persons depicted in the Gardner medals played an important part in the complicated history of Italy before the temporary balance of power established by the triple alliance of Venice, Milan and Florence in 1450. We are fortunate in knowing a great deal about the personalities commemorated by Pisanello and Matteo de' Pasti.

Perhaps the earliest medal in date is that of Niccolò Piccinino. Perugian by birth, he was one of the most successful of the *condottieri*. He was employed by Alfonso of Naples and by Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, whose general-in-chief he was. For his services he was adopted by Visconti in 1439. The medal was struck a few years after that date, probably 1441. The obverse depicts the warrior in sharp relief, profile left, and cut off at the shoulders. He wears a high, banded hat, typical of Renaissance costume, and a simple coat, which may in fact be armor. The borderless inscription refers to his military powers and to his adoption by Visconti (Vicecomes).

The reverse, in crisp relief, shows the griffin of Perugia nursing two infants, an over-obvious allusion to the Romulus and Remus legend. The inscription repeats Piccinino's name and adds that of Braccio da Montone (Braccius), also a Perugian and his teacher in the art of war. Piccinino died at the ripe age of 64 in Milan in 1444. The medal is signed Pisani.P(ictoris).Opus.

Of about the same date is the medal of Filippo Maria Visconti, 1391-1447, Piccinino's employer and the last of the Visconti line. The obverse presents a somewhat gross, yet commanding middle-aged man in right profile and cut off at the shoulders. It certainly gives no hint of the fact that Filippo Maria lived in constant fear of his life. Burckhardt, in his classic, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, remarks: "All the resources of the state were devoted to the one end of securing his personal safety . . .". The long inscription, contained within a simple band, lists his various titles: Duke of Milan, Count of Pavia and Anghiera, and Lord of Genoa (a city which he had in fact lost some years before). *Anglus* refers to the legendary lineage of the Visconti, who claimed to be descended from Anglus, son of Ascanius, who was of course the son of Aeneas. The obverse shows some scratches and damage, especially in the area of the ear. But his rich coat is clearly defined and we can see in its brocade a dove surrounded by a wreath and surmounted by a crown.



Pisanello. Filippo Maria Visconti. Obverse above, reverse below.  
Diam. 4 in. (.10 m.).







Pisanello. Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta. Obverse above, reverse below.  
Diam.  $3\frac{7}{16}$  in. (.09 m.).







Matteo de' Pasti. Isotta degli Atti of Rimini. Obverse above, reverse below.  
Diam.  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. (.08 m.).





The reverse is a complicated and crowded composition, containing a horseman, a groom, and at the left, the duke on horseback in full armor. His helmet displays the *biscione*, or serpent swallowing a child, the device of the Visconti house. In the background is a city, presumably Milan. Just visible in the upper right is a female figure holding what appears to be a scepter, perhaps an allusion to Filippo Maria's ducal rank. It is signed at the bottom *Opus.Pisani.Pictoris*.

Of the subject of the next medal, Burckhardt says, "Unscrupulousness, impiety, military skill, and high culture have seldom been combined in one individual as in Sigismondo Malatesta." Sigismondo Pondolfo Malatesta (1417-68) at one time commanded papal troops, but his greatest command was that of the combined forces of Venice and Florence against the troops of Filippo Maria Visconti, resulting in the victory of Anghiari in 1440. In addition to Rimini, he held the lordship of neighboring Fano, which the inscription tells us. He lost this and much of his other territories in a series of reverses he suffered, at the hands of the pope, toward the end of his life.

Something of Sigismondo's determination and ruthless character show in the hard features captured by Pisanello on the obverse. Shown profile right, bareheaded and cut off at the shoulders, he wears a coat of mail, decorated (as is the inscription) with the four-petaled rose of the Malatesta.

The reverse shows Sigismondo in full armor, visor down, and about to draw his sword. At the right is his coat of arms. At the left a rose tree, and, sprouting from it, a griffin-like elephant encircled by a crown, all in fine, detailed relief. The elephant was another heraldic symbol of the Malatesta. The medal is signed *Opus.Pisani.Pictoris*. It must date from about 1445 since Pisanello left Rimini early in the next year.

The fourth medal depicts Isotta degli Atti. Although Pisanello did a medal of Isotta, the Gardner example is by Matteo de' Pasti, a Veronese whose birthdate is unknown. He settled in Rimini in 1446. It is no doubt from Pisanello that he learned the art of casting medals. After Pisanello's departure in 1446, Matteo rose to high favor with the Malatesta court, and not only as a medalist, for he was supervisor of the construction of Leon Battista Alberti's great church at Rimini. It is interesting to note that he produced a medal of Alberti and that Alberti himself produced medals. Matteo traveled extensively, but died at Rimini in 1467.

There are a number of medals by Matteo of Isotta. The Gardner medal, clearly dated 1446 on the reverse, is unsigned. Since he usually signed his works, it has been suggested that this piece was done on his design by assistants.

Although she bore him several bastards, Isotta did not become Sigismondo's wife until 1456 when, it was rumored, he had his third wife poisoned in order to marry her. She survived her husband and tried to put forward the claims of her own children to the Lordship of Rimini. She was not successful and was probably poisoned in 1470 by Roberto Malatesta, a bastard by an earlier mistress.

Cut off at the shoulders with no inscription underneath, profile right, Matteo presents us with an attractive woman in her thirties. Her hair style represents the height of fashion at the time, the hair being shaved back to the level of the ears and arranged elaborately behind. The borderless inscription is simple. However, the "D" preceding Isotta is a problem. Since she was not yet married to Sigismondo it is doubtful that it stands for *Domina*, meaning Mistress of Rimini. Probably it stands for *Donna*, a title attached to any woman of rank. The reverse bears the date at the bottom and shows in low but clear relief the Malatesta elephant grazing in a field.

These four medals are fascinating for their historical connections. But each is a masterful example of the short-lived hand craft of medal casting. They rank high in the relatively small corpus of Renaissance medals produced before the sixteenth century. The Gardner has in these four small objects a treasure that any museum or collector would envy.

FREDERICK DEN BROEDER

#### NOTE

*The medals are all displayed in obverse. Visitors wishing especially to see the reverse of any of the medals may apply to the office.*

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# FENWAY COURT

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## AN ITALIAN PALACE?

WHEN MR. AND MRS. JOHN L. GARDNER fled the heat of Venice in September 1897 they brought with them part of a fifteenth century palace. Eight balustrades from balconies of the Ca'd'Oro on the Grand Canal had been removed while the *palazzo* was undergoing renovation. Reproductions replaced the weathered originals sold to the Gardners. Other architectural fragments — medallions, window frames and balustrades — followed them to Boston, where the Gardners were planning to build a museum to house their art collection. By 1900 Mrs. Gardner was a widow and the Ca'd'Oro balconies overlooked the central court of a new yellow-brick building on the Fenway.

Although the Gardner Museum was a highly personal creation a number of influences molded the interests of the founder. Had Mrs. Gardner lived in New York it is unlikely that the museum would have been what it is. Boston society was not dominated by fortunes such as the Vanderbilts', and its architectural taste was not overwhelmed by the imposing chateaux that lined Fifth Avenue.

Events leading up to the decision to build Fenway Court began around 1880. At that time the Gardners lived in a house built in 1860 by Mrs. Gardner's father at 152 Beacon Street in what was then the new Back Bay. Of cut brownstone, the exterior was French in a Boston way. Inside, the influence in décor was said to be that of Paris. In 1880 Mr. Gardner acquired the house next door and had it joined to his. In it was made a music room for small recitals. New furniture was added, articles of some value and importance were bought on trips to Europe, among them examples of Empire furniture, Gobelin tapestries, paintings by the Barbizon School and their followers, and eighteenth-century prints. Entertaining was done on a somewhat grander scale and the company

was often distinguished. Several guests were to have an influence on the atmosphere at 152 Beacon Street. By 1891, a visitor found that all was now Italian in style.

Three particular persons came into the Gardners' world and molded their taste during those years. Professor Charles Eliot Norton, whose friend John Ruskin had published *The Stones of Venice* in 1851, gave lectures at Harvard which were frequently attended by Boston matrons. Ruskin's admiration for the architectural style of North Italian Gothic, with its polychrome decoration, was communicated to a wide audience by Norton's popular lectures. Mrs. Gardner attended in 1878 and her friendship with the Professor led to the Dante Society meetings in 1885. Through his influence she acquired books and manuscripts, including some fine copies of Dante.

During the winter of 1880-81 F. Marion Crawford, born and raised in Rome and fully bilingual, spent afternoons reading aloud in Italian at 152 Beacon Street, forming a close friendship that was to last for years. Then in 1884 a trip around the world brought the Gardners to Venice, her first trip there since school days. They had traveled together in Northern Europe and the Orient but now they discovered the galleries of Venice, where they bought postcards of paintings by Bellini, Titian and a host of other painters, examples of whose works are now in the museum. There in Venice the expatriate Bostonians, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Curtis, entertained the Gardners at the Palazzo Barbaro and there they met Mrs. Katherine Bronson, who had a villa at Asolo and a palace in Venice which the Gardners visited in the years ahead. And while Mr. Gardner recovered from an illness, his wife spent the month with young Ralph Curtis exploring Venice, another friendship that left its mark in Fenway Court.

The Gardners returned to Venice in 1886 and 1888, and spent August there in 1890, renting the Palazzo Barbaro. The passion for Italian objects had been building slowly. The death of Mr. Stewart in 1891 left Mrs. Gardner with greater financial resources which she put to use during their next trip in 1892. She acquired a number of things in Venice including an Adam and Eve, then attributed to Cranach, and A Young Commander by Suttermans, but, strangely, no Italian paintings. A Madonna thought to be by Fra Lippo Lippi she had bought at auction in London in the spring, but that was overshadowed by *The Concert* by Vermeer bought at auction in Paris.

The year 1894 brought increasing familiarity with Italian art. Bernard Berenson sent Mrs. Gardner a copy of his book on Venetian painters, and this prompted resumption of their correspondence, which



she had terminated five years earlier. In the spring the Gardners sailed for Europe, intending to stay at least a year. They met Berenson in London in July, and a month later he wrote offering to buy Botticelli's *Tragedy of Lucretia* for her, his first act as her agent.

The Gardners returned home late in 1895. They had missed the opening reception at the new Boston Public Library in April. McKim, Mead and White, at that time America's most fashionable architects, had created the building in Copley Square with an interior court and marble cloister inspired by the Italian Renaissance. Although many architects had turned to the rendering of French chateaux by the 1890's, McKim, Mead and White for inspiration used both France and Italy. Whether or not Mrs. Gardner approached Stanford White, as has been suggested, the eventual choice of Willard T. Sears as the architect named to design a museum for her was not surprising.

When Mr. Gardner had inherited his father's Brookline house and its greenhouses in 1885 Sears had been employed for alterations. He was known to Mrs. Gardner as an active, respected Boston architect. The partnership of Sears and Charles A. Cummings had been established in Boston in 1864. The firm had become particularly busy after the 1872 fire destroyed large areas of Boston's business district. It was responsible for the architecture of several downtown buildings constructed in black and white marble. But the firm's most important surviving building, the New Old South Church in Copley Square, was dedicated on December 15, 1875. The architectural historian Walter Kilham has suggested that the firm here created "an amazing interpretation of North Italian Gothic."

When in September 1896 Mrs. Gardner met Sears on a train as both were going to the same wedding, she asked him to prepare plans showing a museum with living apartments above it. He drew plans in accordance with their original intention of replacing their Beacon Street house with a new building filling the entire lot. But by 1897, Mr. Gardner was trying to convince his wife that cramped, residential Beacon Street was not the proper location for their museum. He liked a site on the Fenway.

For only a short time had the idea of building on the Fenway been possible. Extending the Back Bay westward had become a problem in the 1870's because of the presence of mud flats and marshes allegedly "so noxious that clams and eels could not live in them." The landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted had solved this in the early eighties by draining the flats and converting them into wholesome, if lonely, parkland, skirted by an avenue called the Fenway.

At the time Mrs. Gardner was adamant. The Fenway was too far





ABOVE: The museum in 1903. Although Venetian windows faced the enclosed garden, the building showed no other signs of a particular style. LEFT: The Court from the North Cloister.





(Courtesy of the Chicago Historical Society)



ABOVE: The eclectic clutter of Mrs. Potter Palmer's picture gallery, 1892. LEFT (opposite page): The parlor, 152 Beacon Street. LOWER RIGHT: The Titian Room in the museum. Paintings on top of one another (just visible to the left in the Beacon Street Parlor), walls covered with fabric, objects left on the tables, and curtained doorways were translated into the museum arrangement. Columns and unusual textiles are less formal than at Mrs. Palmer's. The molding and picture over the door at Beacon Street were repeated exactly.





from the middle of things. Meanwhile Sears was busy on plans for the museum to fill the Beacon Street site, galleries opening onto a central court with apartments above. Perhaps the plans were changed to accommodate the many architectural fragments that were bought in 1897. Among the notes kept by Sears, there is a gap between his first meeting in September 1896 and the next entry: "Dec. 14, 1898 — Attended J. L. Gardner's funeral in the forenoon." Mr. Gardner had an understanding with his wife that in the event that one died the other would carry on their ideas for a museum. Within two weeks, Sears was called, the plans approved, and he was directed to begin immediately. But on the very next day, 30 December 1898, Mrs. Gardner suddenly announced that a site had been bought on the Fenway. The plans must be altered, four floors instead of five, and windows added all around. And now there was room for a small theater.

After Mr. Gardner's death the idea of the museum took on added significance for his widow; its scope and purpose changed subtly but significantly. No longer would it be a home which would serve as a museum, for their own pleasure while they lived and for the public's thereafter. Instead it became a forceful expression of Mrs. Gardner's personality.

The project had been conceived in secrecy and its implementation was carried out quietly. As construction progressed, the building elicited public curiosity. Mrs. Gardner ordered the importation of Italian workmen whose limited English would prevent communication with the press. If the workmen divulged nothing neither did the austerity of the exterior.

Confronted by the knowledge that Mrs. Gardner wished to build a Venetian Gothic palace, and remembering the asymmetry and the dark, almost Byzantine opulence of the New Old South Church, how is the severity of the museum façade to be understood? It has been suggested that Mrs. Gardner's original intention was to cover the front of Fenway Court with architectural details as one sees in Venice. However, when Sears informed her that balconies, medallions and columns designed for Italy might not survive many New England winters, she placed them in the court. The exterior, then, was dealt with summarily. The roof suggests an Italian antecedent and the same source might be inferred from the general outlines and fenestrations, but the yellow-brick facing of the unadorned façade has made the building unidentifiable. This may have been prompted by thrift on the part of the founder or, more likely, her desire to surprise the visitor by the contrast with the rich interior.



From the beginning she dominated the proceedings. The Sears notebook on the museum's construction reflects calm acceptance of the difficulties involved in dealing with a client who wished to be her own architect. For although the drawings were done by Edward Nichols, a young architect in Sears' office, the design was Mrs. Gardner's and Sears mockingly referred to himself as her draftsman.

When she saw the plans providing for an all-steel framework she informed Sears that since Venetian palaces did not have such modern refinements, *her* palace would not have them either. This caused tension with the Boston Building Department; however, despite periods of intransigence, Mrs. Gardner compromised. Steel beams were used in portions of the structure and she even accepted the fakery of having a black and white marble column in the court hollowed out and filled with a steel shaft. She could accept such compromises because archaeological authenticity had not been her goal. Looking at the court today the viewer can see how she placed a fourth-century capital on a twentieth century concrete column, and how she simulated the effect of marble by sponging red and white paint onto plaster walls. To achieve a pleasing or dramatic effect, authenticity was not a necessary factor.

As soon as she could Mrs. Gardner moved into Fenway Court. Ground had been broken in 1899 and the incorporation of the museum had been granted on 1 December 1900. After 18 November 1901 she was actually in residence, although she had been on the job with the workmen since construction began. The following year was devoted to arranging the collection in the rooms, a process that continued until her death. Although each room has an individual cast, there is, overall, a unifying and personal presentation of things which is less of a surprise than the architecture. A comparison with the arrangements used at 152 Beacon Street shows that she was already mixing things according to a scheme that would bring out the quality of each object. This random arrangement — carefully conceived — is not unusual for the day. A photograph of the picture gallery in Mrs. Potter Palmer's house in Chicago reveals the same mixture of styles, and paintings stacked up on walls of damask punctuated by touches of classical architecture. The result was, in the case of Fenway Court, an effect calculated to suggest the accumulation of centuries in a European house.

Some of the special qualities of Fenway Court are clearly seen when it is compared with a similar museum, the one created by Henry Clay Frick in New York City. In 1914 Carrère and Hastings produced for him at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Seventieth Street a large grey-stone building inspired by eighteenth-century France. Its classical ex-

terior proclaims this the residence of a man of respectable taste and considerable wealth. Its large windows invite inspection and one is not surprised to learn that the building is now a museum. In comparison the narrow verticality of the outside windows of the Gardner Museum seems a grudging accommodation to the need for light rather than an invitation to enter and enjoy the art within. The small court at the Frick serves as an introduction to the rooms beyond, rooms which were designed for their owner's use, unlike the Gardner Museum where galleries have only the appearance of having been used, and maintain a more personal flavor. If this existed at the Frick, it has, in contrast to Fenway Court, been changed in the years since Mrs. Frick's death in 1931.

In 1923 a friend from her youth wrote to Mrs. Gardner: "I . . . remember what you said to me . . . namely, that if ever you inherited any money that was yours to dispose of, you would have a house, a house like the one in Milan (the Poldi Pezzoli) filled with beautiful pictures and objects of art, for people to come and enjoy. And you have carried out the dream of your youth. . . ."

If, in creating Fenway Court Mrs. Gardner reverted to a dream of youth, it was a dream that was lost temporarily in the fashion of the times, a dream revived by the curious coincidences of friendship and chance discovery, a dream of Venice from Boston that led to a singular building and collection at a time and in a place where both were possible.

LINDA HEWITT

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# FENWAY COURT

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## TOMMASO INGHIRAMI

IN THE NAVE of the church of S. John Lateran, Rome, where the votive objects are assembled, there is a small panel painting, roughly a foot wide and seven inches high, which at one time was erroneously labeled "The Miracle of S. Salvatore by Masaccio(?)." This panel is obviously a votive painting offered in gratitude for deliverance from distress as can be seen by the statement "Jesu Christo Servatori" in the center and by an interpretation of the events taking place. Between the wheels of a heavily-laden cart, a prelate lies, prayer book in hand as two men attempt to pull him out. Part of the Colosseum is shown behind them, and, in the sky above, Christ looks out from a circle of angels. S. Peter points to the servant below and S. Paul clutches his breast with appropriate concern. The buffalos pulling the cart through the Arch of Titus are being restrained by the drivers. From the legend across the bottom, "T. Phaedrux Tanto Periculo Ereptus," and from the familiar features of the prelate, John Pope-Hennessy, Director, Victoria and Albert Museum, was able to identify the donor as Tommaso Inghirami, nicknamed Phaedrux (Fedro). His portrait by Raphael may be seen in the Gardner Museum, and a version done several years later may be seen in The Pitti Palace in Florence.

Tommaso Inghirami, a familiar figure in the courts of three Renaissance Popes, is today better known by his portraits than by his great deeds or published works. Although a man of some importance in his time, his accomplishments were not of sufficient moment to gain more than a line in history, while his writing went largely unfinished. But the impression he made on his generation can be found in the writing of others. Pietro Bembo and Parrasio, the great grammarians, called him the best orator in Rome of their age. Erasmus, in a letter several years after his death, referred to him as the Cicero of his time; and in the

greatest poem of the Renaissance, *Orlando Furioso*, Ariosto writes:

Ecco Alessandro, il mio Signor, Farnese:

Oh dotta compagnia che seco mena!

*Fedro*, Capella, Porzio, il Bolognese. . . .

Canto 46, V. 13

[Here comes my lord Alessandro Farnese: Oh what learned company he brings with him!]

His biography as recorded in *Serie di Ritratti d'Uomini Illustri Toscani* edited by Giuseppe Allegrini (Firenze, 1768, Vol. II) gives this account of the life and death of Tommaso Inghirami.

His father, Paolo, and his mother, Lucrezia Barlettani, were both of noble families of Volterra, a city west of Siena in Tuscany. Two years after the birth of Tommaso in 1470, the city was sacked, his father killed and he and his sister removed by an uncle to Florence. Here Lorenzo de' Medici, a family friend, undertook the protection of the boy. He was tutored in the fine arts, particularly poetry and oratory until the age of thirteen, when he went to Rome to finish his studies and to serve the pope. His fellow countryman, Bishop Jacopo Gherardi of Aquino, took an interest in him, and helped him in the study of philosophy, history, politics and those other, necessary concerns — life at court and the manners of a gentleman. His natural gifts and early training stood up well in Rome where he took part in dramatic presentations. As Phaedra in Seneca's *Hippolytus*, he established such a reputation for improvising Latin verse that the stage name became his own. Thus he was called Fedro by everyone and signed himself that way in letters.

His reputation with the papal court increased and so did his position. In 1493 Alexander VI sent him with the Cardinal of S. Croce, Bernardino Carvajal, as Nuncio to Emperor Maximilian who was in Milan. While Lodovico Sforza ("Il Moro") was lord of Milan, Inghirami was engaged in lengthy and important affairs for the church. He was called on to perform for the Emperor and so pleased Maximilian that the titles Poet Laureate and Count Palatine were bestowed on him, and he and his heirs were given the privilege of adding the imperial eagles to their arms. As a reward for his service the pope made him a canon of S. Peter's and of S. John Lateran.

Inghirami served Pope Julius II as secretary, receiving ambassadors and preparing briefs, and was made librarian for the Vatican in recognition of his discovery of classical manuscripts at Bobbio and placed in charge of the secret archives in Castel S. Angelo. He was named secretary of the Lateran council which was called in 1512 while Louis XII, King of France, was holding the schismatical council in Milan and he









Votive panel, Church of S. John Lateran, Rome (photograph by Alinari)

*preceding page*

COUNT TOMMASO INGHIRAMI, Oil on panel, 35 x 24½ inches (0.89 x 0.62 meters). There are vertical cracks in the surface and restorations above the pupil of the left eye and on the right hand. Purchased in 1898 from the Palazzo Inghirami in Volterra by Bernard Berenson for Mrs. Gardner. A copy made at the time of purchase now hangs in the Palazzo.



Detail showing Inghirami



was the secretary to the college of cardinals which elected Leo X in 1513. His golden oratory placed him among the few to deliver a eulogy on the death of Julius II. The title Cavaliere dello Spron d'Oro (Knight of The Golden Spur) was given him by the new Pope and he was among the few to offer condolences in person to Leo X on the death of his brother, Giuliano de' Medici.

Was he destined for a Cardinal's hat? He had little real power beyond his titles and ability, and perhaps he was passed over for more political figures. His strength was in erudition and for that reason, no doubt, Raphael placed him at his writing desk, book open and pen in hand. That he was "one of the more singular among the appearances that Raphael as a portraitist, was called upon to paint," is noted by S. J. Freedberg in *Painting of The High Renaissance in Rome and Florence* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961). His analysis of the portrait follows: "Wall-eyed and almost grossly stout, it would seem that he must defy even Raphael's abilities to resolve a recalcitrant nature into a semblance of harmony. . . . The great rounded body — clad in a luminous brick-red such as only Raphael's palette can mix — framed by the enclosing movement of the arms, is posed in an almost abstractly defined oval tight within the picture frame." By manipulating this oval and repeating the geometric form for his head the artist gives the feeling, echoed in the movement of his eyes, that the bulk is rising and turning, the exact opposite of what one would associate with such a mass. This is lost, Professor Freedberg goes on to say, in the later version where slight changes "are enough to vitiate the brilliant, almost humorous aesthetic point of the original design."

More recently in *The Portrait in the Renaissance* (New York, 1966), John Pope-Hennessy has called attention to this as "the first independent Renaissance portrait that is not psychologically self-contained; the sitter has been interrupted at his desk. . . ." The desk "establishes a context for the sitter's volatile, animated personality," those qualities which made him such a good actor and popular figure. Nor did his talents end there. He is credited with producing a performance in Latin of the *Poenulus* of Plautus, embellished by theater decorations which Inghirami himself designed.

His untimely death in 1516 as reported in the biography edited by Allegrini explains the reason for the votive panel. He went out one morning on the back of a mule. When they encountered some buffalos pulling a cart, the sight so disturbed the mule that he threw his rider between the wheels of the cart. Although Inghirami was seemingly unhurt, the accident affected his physical condition, he contracted a



disease for which no remedy was found and in a short time he died. Apparently he suffered internal injuries or was so weakened by being bled that he was prey to disease. In any event, the panel confirms the report that he suffered a fall from a mule and that he believed that he had been saved from a worse fate by the intervention of the Lord. Had the fall killed him the panel would not exist.

As a votive painting, the picture in S. John Lateran is better than most. It has been done with true concern for narrative and executed in a style that suggests the work of Raphael's follower, Giulio Romano. The mule with a broken girth, the drivers struggling with the beasts, the men offering succour to the victim, these and other touches ably tell the story. Besides the name, "T. Phaedrus," in the inscription, several details identify the panel with Inghirami. The wandering eye in the familiar round face and the ring on the first finger appear in the portrait. The golden spurs, visible on his feet, are the symbol of his knighthood, and the cartwheel that dominates the center of the picture is rendered in the same terms as the three cartwheels which, with the imperial eagles, make up the coat of arms for Tommaso Inghirami.

ROLLIN HADLEY

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## NOTES

The administration is obliged to limit the number of persons on tours during closed hours. Only one tour limited to the thirty persons first to arrive at each hour will be offered at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. During the closed month of August, the same rule will apply to the guided tours offered Monday through Friday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Persons arriving after the hour will not be admitted to these tours.

On open evenings, the first Thursday of the month for eleven months of the year (not during August) the concert will begin at 8:30 and the guided tour at 7:30. This is fifteen minutes earlier than the previous schedule.

## MUSIC

- 18 JUNE — Mark Pearson, bass-baritone
- 20 JUNE — Star Love Poole, piano
- 22 JUNE — Dang Pil Kim, tenor
- 24 JUNE — Carl Davis, piano
- 25 JUNE — Alfred and Heidi Kanwischer, piano — 4 hands
- 27 JUNE — Michael Thomopoulous, piano
- 29 JUNE — Virginia Gene Shankel, violin
  
- 1 JULY — Eleanor Michaelson, mezzo-soprano
- 2 JULY — Natasha Lutov, mezzo-soprano; Edwin Hymovitz, piano
- 4 JULY — MUSEUM CLOSED
- 6 JULY — Richard Burke, tenor  
at 8:45 p.m. John Gibbons, harpsichord
- 8 JULY — Francis Hester, bass
- 9 JULY — The Violone Trio
- 11 JULY — Robert Goepfert, piano
- 13 JULY — Carol Sullivan, soprano
- 15 JULY — Ansgarius Aylward, violin
- 16 JULY — Nancy Cirillo, violin; Mitchell Andrews, piano
- 18 JULY — Robert Paul Sullivan, guitar
- 20 JULY — Chattanooga Boy's Choir
- 22 JULY — Nan Francis, lyric-soprano and Robert Gregg, bass-baritone
- 23 JULY — Quartet; flute, violin, piano and cello
- 25 JULY — Anne Sanders, piano
- 27 JULY — Ruth Rabinovitz, violin
- 29 JULY — Janet Walker, mezzo-soprano
- 30 JULY — Klaus Heitz, cello





# FENWAY COURT

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## GIOVANNI DI PAOLO

TO TAKE APART an Italian Renaissance altarpiece with its many panels in predella and wings offered certain advantages for monetary gain. Each part was an entity and the individual picture was more easily transported and displayed by private collectors than was the whole, cumbersome original creation. The reconstruction on paper of these altarpieces is one of the undertakings of the art historian. A good example of this is the Roverella altarpiece of Cosimo Tura (Ferrarese, 1430-1495). The central panel is in the National Gallery, London, the wings are in Rome and San Diego, the lunette is in the Louvre, Paris, and the predella panels that have survived are now divided between the Metropolitan Museum, New York, The Fogg Art Museum at Harvard and the Early Italian Room of the Gardner Museum. By coincidence three predella panels for a lost altarpiece by Giovanni di Paolo (Sienese, 1403-83) have taken a similar course, two in the same galleries as the predella panels by Tura — the Fogg and Gardner Museums — with a third in the collection of Mr. Jack Linsky, New York. In the *Catalogue of Exhibited Drawings and Paintings* (published by the Trustees of the Gardner Museum, Boston, 1931) Philip Hendy related the Gardner panel with the panel now in the Linsky Collection. John Pope-Hennessy in his book *Giovanni di Paolo* (Oxford University Press, 1938) added the panel now at Harvard and dated them *c.* 1460. A fourth panel at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, he suggested as the central panel of the predella, but that is less of a certainty than that the others are all from the same work. These are related by dimensions and by subject, the life of Christ. The Nativity in the Fogg Museum and the Adoration of the Magi in the Linsky Collection must have appeared side by side one another for they share a common perspective view. Whether, like the Tura predella, other panels of the Flight into Egypt and the Presenta-





THE NATIVITY, 11 x 9½ inches (.279 x .241 meters). Courtesy of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard. Grenville Winthrop Bequest. Purchased by Mr. Winthrop through Bernard Berenson before 1911.





THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI,  $10\frac{1}{4}$  x 9 inches (.260 x .229 meters).  
Courtesy of Mr. Jack Linsky, New York. Formerly Bondy and Auspitz Collections, Vienna.





THE CHILD JESUS DISPUTING IN THE TEMPLE, also referred to as Christ Among the Doctors.  $10\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$  inches (.267 x .235 meters). Formerly in the Collection of Sir George Donaldson. Purchased in 1908 from a London dealer by Bernard Berenson for Mrs. Gardner.





THE CHILD JESUS DISPUTING IN THE TEMPLE, Church of Sta. Croce, Florence. Fresco over the door to the sacristy by Taddeo Gaddi (Florentine, c. 1300-c. 1366). Besides the figure of Christ only one doctor's head survives from the central group of the story. Two bystanders are looking in through the window. (*Photograph by Alinari*)



tion in the Temple were included cannot be determined. The inclusion as one of the series of The Child Jesus Disputing in the Temple was not unusual in late medieval art but during the fifteenth century it is a subject rarely seen. (A sixteenth century treatment of the subject on a much larger scale by Paris Bordone, Venetian, 1500-71, is in the Titian Room, Gardner Museum.)

To present these scenes of the life of Christ, the artist was careful to adhere to accepted models, and in Siena, a city that was proud of its popes and saints, the demands of tradition were particularly strong. The art of Duccio and Simone Martini had charted a course too demanding for their followers, who for three-quarters of a century had been unable to surpass these masters. In the early *quattrocento* a new religious spirit and a return of prosperity brought an innovation in the arts. The old tradition was given a reprieve before the city acceded fully to the art of the Renaissance. With Giovanni di Paolo and his generation the traditional school of painting was to vanish. In the beginning of the sixteenth century Sienese artists were valued in major cities across central Italy, but these were no longer artists of the same tradition.

The Sienese School of painting was a fusion of Gothic elements with the existing Byzantine style, in which, from time to time, appeared the strong influence of Giotto. From the papal court at Avignon, where Sienese bankers and merchants were called and where Simone Martini lived from 1331 until his death in 1344, there came a predilection for the courtly and mystical, and a symbolic and highly decorative treatment of nature that is associated with French medieval art. From the illuminated manuscripts brought over the Alps, the Sienese adopted the strange enclosures and artificial space of the miniaturists. Giovanni di Paolo, who illuminated several manuscripts, is at his best in small narrative panels, like these, to which the bright hues of his dry, tempera technique is aptly suited.

As a young man he was exposed to the art of a generation that had succeeded Simone Martini. During the third decade of the fifteenth century two artists, Gentile da Fabriano and Donatello, made their appearance within the walls of Siena, and from their example a new generation was able to find certain strengths. The first, a much traveled and well-known exponent of the Gothic international style came to Siena in 1425 after completing a large altarpiece in Florence. There can be no doubt that Giovanni went to the neighboring city of Florence to see this tapestry-like painting of the Adoration of the Magi (now in the Uffizi). Elements in versions of the same subject by the younger artist are directly traceable to it; the old king in his Adora-



tion, for example. From Donatello's flat reliefs on the baptismal font in the Baptistery of S. Giovanni, Siena, he perceived a way of creating perspective with abstract line, suggesting the fields in the countryside near his native city.

But in the final analysis these panels show a Florentine influence from other sources. Hendy noted in the Gardner panel the surprising similarity between the head of the first seated figure on the right and a doctor in the surviving portion of a fresco of the same subject by Taddeo Gaddi. This was painted around 1330 over the door to the sacristy of the church of Santa Croce, Florence. Did Giovanni actually use this as his model? There is the possibility of a lost painting which served as an intermediary, but there are other similarities between the two which argue for the direct influence of Gaddi. In both paintings the Christ Child is seated on a throne full front and full length with the doctor looking up from below. Although He is not speaking His gesture seems to include Him in the discussion, and in both He appears to be looking out of the picture, not recognizing the arrival of Mary and Joseph. Other figures set into the architecture give the viewer a feeling for the existence of adjoining rooms. Both Duccio and Giotto in their versions of this subject used the architecture as a backdrop and to emphasize the position of the Child. He is to the right of center in order to allow room for the Virgin and Joseph to enter on the left. By flattening the perspective, tilting the tiled floor at a steep angle, Duccio makes the Christ Child appear higher than the six doctors around Him. Giotto places Him on the same level in the middle of ten doctors relying on His halo and the background to draw attention to Him. Giovanni has reduced the number of figures and placed the Child in the exact center.

There is one other element in all three panels which is not found in the sources mentioned above, and that is his use of space. In Florence much had been done in the quest to define volume and space. Giovanni's figures lack volume and are badly proportioned, in themselves and one to another. But his organization of the space between them and around them is not from Gothic models or from the masters of the fourteenth century. And as noted above, he reduced the number of figures and abcentered the action. These precepts he learned from the Renaissance, most probably from the art of Fra Angelico, another master of fine line and pure color whose work was known to Giovanni. And, like Fra Angelico, Giovanni was an artist of singular vision.

Thus it is in these three panels Joseph appears in a very different light than in other fifteenth century versions. The innocence of the

youthful Virgin is separated physically and emotionally from her doddering husband. The Nativity shows him outside the building asleep (not uncommon in early fourteenth century versions of the Nativity). In the next panel, however, he glances furtively at the blessing bestowed on the old king as the young king comforts him, by placing his hands on Joseph's shoulder and hand. Again in the temple, the Virgin's surprise and joy is quite different from his bewilderment.

Bernard Berenson, in his introduction to the *Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York, 1909), referred to Giovanni di Paolo as "whimsical, absurd, frequently incredible, but always entertaining. . . ." These three panels have all of those qualities and a quality of beauty that was the heritage of Siena.

ROLLIN HADLEY

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# FENWAY COURT

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## DEGAS' MADAME GAUJELIN

**D**EGAS is acknowledged as a painter who both mastered the tradition from which his painting came and who emerged from traditional painting as a modern master. In the Yellow Room of the Gardner Museum the portrait of Madame Gaujelin, which Degas painted in 1867, shows him at his best: in control of the values of his tradition and also, even early in his career, with the initiative and intelligence to make every effort to extend that tradition.

Anything written on Degas always refers to his great admiration for Ingres and the perfected drawing which Ingres considered the touchstone of painting. Degas' success as a master draughtsman is obvious in the portrait of Madame Gaujelin. Like Ingres, Degas had such complete and subtle control of line and shading that any trace of technique is unnoticed when one is faced with the finished product: the perfected illusion of a solid, yet delicate, tactile three-dimensional head. This ability to create plastic values with apparent ease is what Bernard Berenson must have admired in Degas when he recommended in 1904 that Mrs. Gardner buy the portrait of Madame Gaujelin; and the recommendation of the connoisseur of Italian art implies a place for Degas within the tradition which came out of Italy and was the major influence in painting in Europe until the time of Degas and Manet. Both for its plasticity and for its quality, the portrait of Madame Gaujelin can be compared favorably to any picture in this museum.

The most interesting comparison is with the portrait in the Blue Room which Manet did of his mother in 1869. The comparison of the two painted faces illustrates how classic was Degas' approach to portraiture in 1867. Madame Manet's face and hair are painted in broad highlights and deep shadow; certain areas of the face, such as the forehead, read even as flat planes. The lines and planes of the face are distinct, one



Edgar Degas (1834-1917), MADAME GAUJELIN, 1867, 23½ x 17½ inches.

This portrait which was commissioned by Madame Gaujelin was refused on its completion. Reportedly Madame Gaujelin was displeased with the likeness. There is a drawing by Degas of Madame Gaujelin in her costume as a ballerina and an oil portrait sketch earlier in date and unrelated to this portrait. The oil sketch shows a young, more vivacious woman.





Edouard Manet (1832-1883), MADAME AUGUSTE MANET, 1869,  $38\frac{1}{2}$  x  $31\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

For information on this painting and on the portrait of Madame Gaujelin see Sir Philip Hendy's *Catalogue of the Exhibited Paintings and Drawings*, published by the Trustees, 1931.

from the other, and while there is no lack of quality in the drawing, the head tends to fragment into its separate elements. In the Manet portrait there is none of the careful, always controlled drawing of the Degas face which has as its particular result the illusion of continuously rounded volumes and smoothly intersecting planes. Degas' drawing in the portrait of Madame Gaujelin, with its successful intent to create the third dimension on a flat surface, has more to do with Raphael than with Manet, whose refusal to model surfaces in light and dark shading was the beginning of the breakup of the sculptural tradition in painting.

If Degas' achievement rested with the mastering of drawing, however great that achievement, he would not be the painter he is known to be. Nor does the quality of his portraiture account for his place as one of the most important modern painters. One must, however, mention the brilliance of this portrait in terms of psychological impact. A particular sternness of attitude on the part of the painter, which is known to be part of his character, is apparent in this portrait, and whether or not Madame Gaujelin had Degas' unflinching intellectual awareness and pride, they are seen in this portrait. This is character portraiture; we are not allowed to escape from the dominant attitude in the portrait through recognition of a particular, transitory, emotional state on the part of the sitter or through any rhetorical pose. The pose is totally unrhetorical and the emotion is completely controlled. Madame Gaujelin seems more than anything else *aware* — and it is her terribly direct gaze that causes the feeling on our part of confrontation, rather than of a merely bland and inconsequential meeting of another portrait.

But great portraits had been done since the Renaissance, and Degas is one of the finest modern painters. The portrait of Madame Gaujelin is more complicated than a simple portrait, however good, painted in the plastic tradition. This complexity comes from Degas' perceptions about painting and the issues he raised in his pictures to explore those perceptions. The issues he felt worth developing have in fact been important in the history of painting in the last hundred years.

Another brief comparison of the portrait of Madame Gaujelin with the portrait of Madame Manet gives an idea of the complexity of Degas' picture. Madame Manet sits in a chair surrounded by very deep shadow from which her face and to less degree her figure and her chair stand out in contrast. Because of the uninterrupted dark of the background, the entire visual interest of the picture is concentrated in Madame Manet's brilliantly lighted face. With the placing of the subject in the center of the canvas and with nothing distracting from the focal point of the face, the composition in two dimensions is reduced to the simplest possi-



bility. Composition in depth is as uncomplicated: a brilliant, lighted area always reads in front of a dark, neutral area.

Degas, too, places his sitter in the center of the canvas, but it is here that the similarity ends. The way Degas has chosen to construct the picture around his sitter, making the elements of the background and even Madame Gaujelin's clothes part of an intricate composition in two dimensions and the way he has subordinated the careful construction of the fictive depth of the picture to the two-dimensional composition show a will toward a new direction in painting.

In the portrait of Madame Gaujelin, Degas did not deny plasticity or fictive depth, but the space around Madame Gaujelin is not drawn with the disguising ease which is so evident in the drawing of the face. The large planes, of the red arabesque on both sides of Madame Gaujelin, of her dress, of the dressing table and of the back walls, while they indicate easily the space of the room, tend to separate themselves from a coherent, continued construction of depth and stand out as flat areas of color, shapes which fit together almost on the two-dimensional surface of the picture. These shapes are angled and geometric and the lines which edge them are conspicuous and play strongly as a two-dimensional design. The simple division of the bottom quarter of the picture into the broad black of the dress sharply cut off by the red arabesque of the corner and the division of the top part of the canvas into two rectangles show a will to work with large areas of the canvas. In these areas the paint is applied evenly and carefully, and the result, particularly in the walls and even in the red arabesque pattern, is dense and opaque colored surfaces. These surfaces have a tactility which has little to do with three-dimensional form. Rather it is more that the surface of the painting, the picture plane, is established, not as a window to look through, but as the painted surface in front of us.

In the last one hundred years since the time of Manet, Degas, and Monet the development of painting has been more avowedly self-conscious and self-concerned than it had ever been before. The most relevant, if rhetorical, question raised in modern painting by critics and painters themselves has been that of what exactly painting is, and the means of answering this question have been and still are a concentration on the elements, material and conceptual, of painting. The development that has accompanied this self-questioning of painters has been a series of experimental reductions of the elements thought necessary to painting and additions of concepts and techniques which were thought to expand the visual imagination. The greatest repudiation of a concept and technique has been the denial of the plastic tradition, which used perspective

*Photograph by Joseph Klima, Jr., Detroit.*



Edgar Degas, WOMAN PULLING ON GLOVES, 1876, 24 x 18½ inches.

Kanzler Collection, Detroit. Reproduced with permission of Mrs. Ernest Kanzler.





Henri Matisse (1869-1954), LA PORTE-FENÊTRE, 1914, 46 x 35 1/2 inches.  
Paris, Collection M. and Mme. Georges Duthuit. Reproduced with permission  
of Madame Duthuit.

and modeling to build up a rational and coherent illusion of depth and three-dimensional forms within the picture frame, in favor of two-dimensional values of shape, color, and design on the flat surface of the picture.

The conscious will that is seen in the portrait of Madame Gaujelin towards composing a picture very obviously in two dimensions is found in much of Degas' later painting. In 1876 he painted *Woman Pulling on Gloves*. The composition of the picture is similar to many of his other paintings in which the picture surface is divided in various ways by vertical lines and bands which quite often read both in depth and on the surface of the picture. The earliest appearance of this kind of compositional device was in the portrait of his sister Thérèse Degas in 1865. In *Woman Pulling on Gloves* both right and left edges of the picture are long, vertical rectangles which could be a door and jamb. These rectangles function in two different ways: in reflecting the shape of the canvas they strengthen the decorative design and maintain it on the surface of the picture; as part of a system of fictive depth, the long thin vertical on the right provides the foreground, and the bottom line of the area on the left projects into the picture providing the most important line of the simple linear perspective.

The willingness to ignore any more complicated construction of depth or even of color places demands on the various areas of the composition and their interaction to provide the visual interest of the picture. This interest in *Woman Pulling on Gloves* is the contrast between the large, flat, opaque, linear surfaces of the vertical divisions on the sides of the picture and, on the interior, the small and illusive, almost cloudy shapes of the woman, the furniture and the space around her. This has, of course, a great deal to do with Degas' application of the paint, as do the various textures in the portrait of Madame Gaujelin; and in both paintings abbreviated perspective and the strong simplified two-dimensional design free the painter from the effort of constructing depth and give him more freedom in handling the possibilities inherent in the application of paint; that is, the way paint looks on canvas.

The relevance of Degas' exploring the possibilities of two-dimensional composition can be judged fully only in seeing how important this kind of composition was for painters who came after him.

In 1914 Matisse painted *La Porte-Fenêtre* which, in the large Matisse show of 1966, toured the United States. The critic Clement Greenberg, when he talked at the Museum of Fine Arts on the paintings in the show, said that Matisse had offered more to contemporary painting than anyone in the 20th century. He based this judgment on paintings like *La Porte-*





Henri Matisse, L'ESCARGOT, 1953, 112  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 113 inches.

Tate Gallery, London. Reproduced with permission of the Tate Gallery.

*Fenêtre* which opened new ways of structuring pictures in two dimensions and which offered new explorations of color and form. Whether Matisse had seen *Woman Pulling on Gloves* is difficult to know and unimportant. The same pictorial ideas are at work in both *La Porte-Fenêtre* and in *Woman Pulling on Gloves*. Matisse has filled in the interior space of his picture with black and has used the simple structure-like composition almost as a hanger for his particular idea of bright, hard color. The composition itself and its use to make a strong decorative painting and in creating space and flatness are the same in both pictures.

In 1953 Matisse painted, or rather, painted and cut and pasted, *L'Escargot*, which is now in the Tate Museum. It is a completely abstract assemblage of brightly colored squares, rectangles, and odd shapes of painted paper which fit together as a quizzical exercise in flat and spatial composition. The colors and the simple shapes of each piece of paper are mutually strengthening: the simplicity of the shapes forces us really to look at the brightness of the color and the strength of the color maintains the interest of the shape. *L'Escargot* is the descendant of pictures by Degas like the portrait of Madame Gaujelin. The parts of Degas' portrait which are most eloquent visually are the shapes of the dress, the red arabesque and the yellow and ochre rectangles of the walls, all of which can be flat and independent of a system of perspective and modelled forms. And in *L'Escargot* it is as if the similar flat areas had been freed to be composed. In comparison with *L'Escargot* the colors in the portrait of Madame Gaujelin are subdued. They do, however, have a great deal of strength in this particular picture, and certainly a great part of the sensuous beauty of the portrait is the yellow of the walls. Fragile as this color is, it is maintained by the flat shape it encompasses, as are the stronger reds and blacks. Degas was conscious of the need in painting to free color from light and dark modelling so that it could stand in fuller value to our eyes. The pastels which he did a number of years after the portrait of Madame Gaujelin show how great was Degas' concern for color.

Valery talks of Degas' persistent and stubborn use of the language of painting. Degas could draw and paint ballerinas, horses, and jockeys over and over again because he never tired of the problems of painting, that is the problems of line and shading, of form in space and in outline, and of color. The portrait of Madame Gaujelin shows a number of Degas' concerns for various elements in painting. One of these concerns is certainly for a system of painting in which two-dimensional design does not have to be subservient to the old notion of plasticity. The portrait of Madame Gaujelin is one of the first pictures in which Degas



began to find the value of flat composition, both intrinsically and as a means of approaching problems of color and form. As we see in some of Matisse's painting, Degas' concerns and explorations were not easily forgotten.

RICHARD T. DICKINSON

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## MUSIC

Music Schedule March 1 – April 1, 1968 (*all concerts begin at 3:00*)

- 2 MARCH – Ivan Oak, tenor
- 3 MARCH – Richards Woodwind Quintet
- 5 MARCH – Grace Chen, piano
- 7 MARCH – Mary Beth Peil, soprano  
*Evening at 8:30 – Mary Beth Peil, soprano*
- 9 MARCH – Daniel Pinkham, chamber music
- 10 MARCH – Soulima Stravinsky, piano
- 12 MARCH – Duet: Phyllis Kaplan, soprano; Joan Tractman, dramatic soprano
- 14 MARCH – Bradford Junior College Glee Club, Jack Fisher, director
- 16 MARCH – Bennett Lerner, piano
- 17 MARCH – Endel Kalem, viola; Tonu Kalem, piano
- 19 MARCH – David H. Carroll, bassoon
- 21 MARCH – Betsy Cox, harpsichord
- 23 MARCH – William Conable, cello
- 24 MARCH – Azusa Fujita, piano
- 26 MARCH – Trio: Raymond Toubman, oboe; Andre Lizotte, clarinet;  
John Miller, bassoon
- 28 MARCH – Marilu Alvarado Rapoport, piano
- 30 MARCH – The Orpheus Singers
- 31 MARCH – Charles Haupt, viola





# FENWAY COURT

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## AN ETRUSCAN CINERARY URN

**P**ERHAPS the earliest civilization to flourish in western Europe was that of the Etruscans. Settling along the western coast of the Italian peninsula during the eighth century B.C., the Etruscan people absorbed local tribes and developed a distinct culture, religion, government and art form. An Etruscan cinerary urn dating from the latter part of the third century B.C., although not unique — three similar urns may be seen at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts alone — is the only definite example of Etruscan work in the Gardner collection. Purchased by Mrs. Gardner in Naples in 1897, it is typical of the period of strong Greek influence in the Hellenistic style, and it serves as an example of several of the late Etruscan customs and tastes.

Although the origins of the Etruscans remain uncertain, the best thesis proposes that they arrived in waves from the Lydian area of the Eastern Mediterranean, a thesis substantiated by Greek influence on Etruscan art and mythology from the beginning, and by the similarity between the language form of the Etruscans and that of the people of Lemnos, an island in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey opposite the ancient city of Troy. Although they were a seafaring people, the name "Etruscan" comes from a later Latin designation meaning "expert in the sacred ways"; the explanation emphasizes the refinement of a religion which played a major role in their existence. The Etruscans practiced ceremonies and rituals which governed everything from the layout of their axis-oriented sanctuaries to the tilling of their land. The observation of nature was central to their beliefs. Its perversity divulged "good signs" and "bad omens"; thunder in various sections of the sky was interpreted as different messages from the Olympiad of gods. Equally important was the flight of birds and the signs perceived in the entrails of sacrificial animals. To the Etruscans death was a continuation and fulfillment of





life — life on earth was regarded as a preparatory stage in the greater life span. Complementing these beliefs was the practice of ancestor worship, evidences of which can be seen on the genealogical lintel inscriptions of family tombs and on urn and sarcophagus inscriptions. What little is known of the Etruscans has come primarily from the gleaning of the major necropoli, the “cities” of tombs found near Etruscan towns. The most important of these are near towns which, at one time or another, were part of the *Dodicapoli* or twelve cities which governed the Etruscan federation. As a result, most of what is known about the Etruscans relates to the religion and funerary practices of the people.

Cinerary urns were used by the Etruscans as early as the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. They were, at first, terra cotta biconical jars with flat covers. During the early seventh century or Villanovan period a deceased warrior’s helmet was often used as a lid; gradually this gave way to a crude portrait head for a cap. The best of the portrait heads made in this “archaic” period came from Chiusi, an Umbrian hill town west of Perugia, which tenaciously held on to its terra cotta industry until Roman absorption in the second century B.C. In the Ionic-Etruscan period (6th-5th centuries) the entombment of the dead became a widespread practice among the nobles and continued to be so through both the Classical (4th century) and Hellenistic period of the third to second centuries. The nobles could afford large and elaborate subterranean tombs, carved sarcophaguses, and the appropriate accoutrements; cremation was practiced by the lower class of the stratified society. Cinerary urns were used more widely as the federation developed into aristocracies, limited in the size of the ruling class.

This social change occurred during the stagnant period in the decades following the major naval victory of the Greeks of southern Italy about 474 B.C. The combination of increased Roman strength and the decline of Etruscan naval power after the Greek debacle at Cuma, near Naples (see map), also marked the beginning of the decline of their sphere of influence. The Etruscans, confined to the boundaries of Etruria proper (between the Arno and Tiber rivers), became more concerned with Roman hegemony than with the Greek colonies to the south and the Celtic invaders in the north, and ceased to exert their influence as a Mediterranean and Italic power. (See M. Pallotino, *Etruscologia*, Milan 1963, pp. 119-137 and A. E. R. Boak, *A History of Rome to 565 A.D.*, New York 1955, pp. 18-30 for a full account.) Without doubt the events of this century severely affected the Etruscan economy. It did not, however, mark an end to their culture which continued to progress under Roman domination until the first century B.C.





Molded terra cotta urn, 1'  $\frac{1}{4}$ " high with lid, 1'  $\frac{1}{8}$ " long, and 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. The lid, made of a darker clay than the base, rests imperfectly on the base.

As the ruling class became more select, few could afford the luxury of hand-carved sarcophaguses and painted tombs; and with the increased affluence of the developing middle class, the simple urn became the most widely used funerary vessel. For some it was probably a measure of economy as well as an expression of acquired taste, for the urns were designed as miniatures of the large sarcophaguses. Easy to obtain, a citizen could purchase an urn of his choosing at one of the local workshops specializing in their manufacture. They were of various materials: terra cotta in Chiusi, travertine in Perugia, alabaster in Volterra and, in other areas, tufa or another local soft stone. The urn at the Gardner Museum is one of thousands molded of terra cotta in Chiusi. It measures 1'  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in height, 1'  $\frac{1}{8}$ " in length, and 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ " in width (31.1 x 30.8 x 15.9 cm.).





The lid viewed from the top. One corner (upper right of photo) is damaged. The underside of the lid is flat so that it does not fit into the base.

The urn is typical of the major motifs of the Hellenistic period. In the tradition begun with the canopic urns of the archaic period, the deceased is represented on the lid. As seen here, the representation is a crudely molded form of a woman whose position is almost totally obscured by the clumsy modeling of her *himation*, or long, scarf-like cloak. The arrangement of the body was customary: the deceased reclined as on a *triclinium* in a position analogous to banqueting. On more elaborate urns of this era, the dead were portrayed with naturalism and often, in the case of men, with their wives. During the second century the iconography changed and where once one might have seen the wife, supplementary figures tended to be an image of Vanth or a Lasa figure, both deities of the Etruscan underworld. Simultaneous with this iconographical shift came a change in portrait style. The figures were modeled with less abstraction and attained a greater realism, similar to the Roman portraits of the late Republic. (One should notice, however, that Etruscan portraits tended toward caricature; that Roman portraits combined elements of Greek idealization and Etruscan caricature.) Thus, as realism was the goal during the third to second century, one can see that the Gardner Museum's urn is of poor quality. There are no marks of incision on the face, and the features, as they exist, are too vague to have been an attempt at portraiture. Although the figure may have had painted facial details (traces of slip can be distinguished although no color remains), in all probability the lid figure was never meant to convey an exact image.





The base of the urn viewed from the side to show the depth of the relief. Three armed Persian warriors, two at the left and one at the right, fight Echetlos who aims his ploy at the fallen soldier. The tangle of shields, swords, capes and arms was less confusing in the original painted state.



The bases were used to depict a scene from religious mythology, an event important to a particular area of Etruria, or for an arrangement of motifs symbolical of the deceased's life. The urn at the Gardner, like the larger ones at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts which have the same design, has, in bas relief, a scene of four men fighting. The scene was once identified as the story of Eteocles and Polynices in "The Seven Against Thebes" from the Oedipus cycle, but this was refuted in 1935 by Dr. Margaret Bieber of Columbia University. Dr. Bieber pointed out that one of the men holds a plow and appears to be fighting three armed soldiers. Recently Dott. Mario Bizzarri of the Museo Fondazione Faina of Orvieto, Italy, identified the scene as part of the Athenian-Persian battle of 490 B.C. on the plain of Marathon, an area lying between Athens and Carystus in Euboea. Bizzarri noted that the hero is Echetlos and was first recognized as such by Winckelmann. The story of Echetlos is related in Pausanias' *Description of Greece* in the narration of that battle: "Now it befell, they say, that in the battle there was present a man of rustic aspect and dress, who slaughtered many of the barbarians [i. e. Persians] with a plough, and vanished after the fight. When the Athenians inquired of the god, the only answer he vouchsafed was to bid them honor the hero Echetlaeus" (trans. J. G. Frazer, London 1898, pp. 49-50; see also W. K. Pritchett, *Marathon*, Berkeley 1960). Bizzarri mentions that Echetlos is known as "The Demon of the Plow" and that many scholars, for various reasons, regard the tale of Echetlos to be connected with an obscure Etruscan religious myth, but the Etruscans borrowed Greek historical themes as well as mythology. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to assume that the Etruscans adopted the story of Echetlos as they had the stories of the Oedipus cycle, those of Jason, Cadmus, and others. This new documentation is supported by the Superintendent of Etruscan Antiquities of Florence, Dott. Guglielmo Maetzke, although Dott. Maetzke concedes that the Etruscans may have interpreted the legend differently than did the Greeks.

The Hellenistic treatment of the base is evident in the attitudes of the figures and in the tension between them and the small frame in which they are enclosed. Their static quality and clumsiness is due to the molding process which accommodated neither detail nor depth. The flailing arms and capes of the soldiers as well as the girdle and plow of Echetlos would appear far more vigorous had the urn been carved. As with the lid, these figures were probably painted. In the original painted state the figures would have seemed livelier than they do without color.

During the last few years interest in the Etruscans, their art, and their civilization has increased tremendously. At the turn of the century,

they were seldom recognized as having a separate culture; more often than not their work was scoffed at as a poor imitation of the Greek mode. A renewed effort to grasp their language, a key to which has not yet been found, and to comprehend the magnitude of their efforts in engineering, agriculture, and metallurgy is now being made. The Roman debt to the Etruscans is slowly being recognized, and with it comes a realization of the people's contributions toward the evolution of the peninsula from a land of Iron Age tribes to a land with a distinct and rich heritage. It is rewarding to find in a small museum, the contents of which are from the most heralded periods of art history, an example of the work done by this significant people.

SUSAN WEST DAY

## Note to Subscribers

This is the first number of Volume Two. Subscribers who wish to receive the other seven numbers are asked to send a check for two dollars payable to the Gardner Museum.

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## TWO MEDALLIONS BY SAINT-GAUDENS

THE DEVELOPMENT of artistic trends in America has, until most recently, been based primarily on a reappraisal of contemporary European styles. During the last quarter of the XIX century, the search for a style suitably reflecting the monumental growth of the nation and its industry reached new heights. It led artists, architects, and sculptors to seek new inspiration from equally monumental periods in their European heritage. Theirs was a search for refinement, perfection and monumentality, inspired and fed by a reawakening interest in the fine arts. This avid interest can be documented by the formation of opera groups, civic orchestras, and museums – and by the buildings in which they were housed. Masterful accomplishments of the Romanesque, Gothic and classicizing Italian Renaissance periods were drawn upon by architects; painters and sculptors looked to Greek, Roman, and the XIV-XV century Italian works as seen reinterpreted by the Academicians of early XIX century France. The end product was a vastly changed interpretation of already reinterpreted motifs and ideas. In the mid-twentieth century the achievements of the eclectic artists pale in comparison with the vigorous strides taken since then. Nineteenth century eclecticism, however, is an important part of our heritage which should not be overlooked.

One of the sculptors influenced by this quest for refinement and realistic perfection in art was Augustus Saint-Gaudens (Dublin, Ireland 1848 – Cornish, New Hampshire 1907). A popular artist in constant demand for portrait plaques, memorial reliefs and monumental statues, Saint-Gaudens was one of the last of the XIX century artists to remain unaffected by the startling, though embryonic, changes taking place in European art. Because his work is representative of the last phase of a popular movement, because he was highly regarded by his contem-

poraries, and because he strove to make a significant contribution to a truly American art, he holds an important place in American art history. The subsequent impact and far-reaching effects of the Post-Impressionist and Cubist movements of France and the Expressionism of Germany on American artists, however, have relegated Saint-Gaudens and many of his contemporaries to near obscurity. Two medallions by Saint-Gaudens are in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: one is of John Singer Sargent; the other, a detail from a larger portrait plaque, is of Mildred Howells. There are numerous other examples of his work in Boston and the immediate area.

From the autobiography, *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, expanded and edited by his son Homer, and from subsequent résumés, one notes that the most important influences on the sculptor were his apprenticeships to two cameo cutters, Avet and Le Brethon, and his formal education in New York, at the Cooper Institute then the National Academy of Design, and in Paris at the École des Beaux Arts under Jouffrey. Certainly one can see their indelible mark in the low-relief work which forms the major portion of the artist's *oeuvre*. Only in his heroic-sized statues such as *Admiral Farragut* (New York City), *General Sherman* (New York City) and, above all, the Adams Memorial (Hartford, Conn.), does Saint-Gaudens use a simpler, more universally appealing style. As is true of any artist, Saint-Gaudens' taste and personal style are most evident in the works which he did for his own enjoyment. Two such pieces are the medallions in the Gardner Museum. The profile portraits of Sargent and of Miss Howells encompass the qualities seen in Saint-Gaudens' work, yet are different enough to provide an effective contrast of the sculptor's style within the bas-relief technique. The first is notable for the informality of handling; the second, in its original version, for the technical skill shown in coping with a unique problem of light.

The small (2 1/2 inch diameter) cast bronze relief of Sargent done in 1880 is appealing: the viewer is drawn by the dexterity with which Sargent's profile is handled, by the lack of fussy detail, by the essence of a man captured with a minimum of modeling. The roughness of the lettering, some of which is squeezed into place at the upper right edge, lends a casual quality to it as does the familiar inscription: *MY FRIEND JOHN SARGENT PARIS JULY MDCCCLXXX. FECE ASG BRUTTO RITRATO*. The painter's head is shown facing the right with a lock of hair falling over his forehead — a note of realism that adds to the informality of the irregular medal. Saint-Gaudens modeled the flow of Sargent's hair with few cuts along the side — just enough to



indicate its direction of growth and to hint at a slight mussiness — and barely at all along the top. The artist's beard and moustache are also suggested rather than defined. It is obvious that Saint-Gaudens applied coarse areas of clay to his form to create the effect, rather than build up the area, then incise it. This sketchy quality is more impressionistic than Saint-Gaudens' other profiles and may be the reason that Saint-Gaudens added the comment *BRUTTO RITRATO*, translatable as crude likeness meaning not a flattering portrait. The likeness, however, is certainly that of Sargent; the comment could not have been added because the profile did not resemble the sitter.

That the artists were well acquainted is documented both by Saint-Gaudens and by Charles M. Mount, author of a biography of Sargent. They had met while Saint-Gaudens was in Paris working on his statue of Admiral Farragut. Though young, Sargent had received recent notice for his portrait of Carolus Duran, his instructor. The friendship between the two developed during meetings at Saint-Gaudens' studio where the sculptor, Sargent, Low, Beckwith, and other American artists comprising the 'Society of American Artists' held what Saint-Gaudens, treasurer of the group, later called "enthusiastic meetings . . . attacking the conservatism of the Academy of Design." The artists had banded together to express their concern over the fact that their works, while being accepted for show by the Salon in Paris, were rejected in New York in favor of the Hudson River School's "ten-acre canvas" landscapes. During this period the two artists exchanged work: Sargent gave Saint-Gaudens a watercolor of a female figure which he had painted in Capri (destroyed in Saint-Gaudens' studio fire in 1904) in exchange for a profile medallion of Jules Bastien-Lepage, a young Parisian painter whose work is not well known today. They again exchanged work in 1890 when Saint-Gaudens gave a relief of Violet Sargent, the painter's sister (location unknown), in return for a painting of Saint-Gaudens' wife and son (also lost in the fire). Later, in the 1890's, both were involved in the decoration of the Boston Public Library, Sargent painting allegorical murals, and Saint-Gaudens holding the commission for the entrance figures which were completed by his brother Louis after the sculptor's death.

Mrs. Gardner obtained the Sargent medal in 1887. She had written to Saint-Gaudens a number of times regarding the bronze reduction and, in return, received a copy and an apology from the sculptor for the coarser quality of the later cast. The original cast, one of which is in the Sargent-Murray-Gilman-Hough House in Gloucester, Massachusetts, is much finer according to Saint-Gaudens' letter.



The relief medallion of John Singer Sargent measures  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches in diameter. It is a reduction from the original which measures  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Both casts are bronze.



The gilded medallion of Mildred Howells ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter) bears strong resemblance to Renaissance medals in its format. Provenance unknown.





Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

The inscription of the bronze relief plaque reads: *MILDRED AND WILLIAM  
DEAN HOWELLS NEW YORK MDCCCXCVIII From AVGVSTVS  
SAINT-GAUDENS.*

The spontaneity which pervades the Sargent medal is atypical. Essentially Saint-Gaudens was a draftsman and a craftsman fascinated with the linear aspects of low relief. In the catalogue of the sculptor's work, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (John Lane Co., New York, 1908), C. Lewis Hind commented:

"Low relief to many has a peculiar fascination, appealing more as a method of drawing than of modeling, and demanding from the artist a far greater sensitiveness in the rendering of light and shade than work in the round. . . . Saint-Gaudens was intrigued with low relief. Indeed, he may be said to have revived the art which flowered in the era of Donatello to such a degree of delicate beauty. . . ."

Although a comparison with the reliefs of XV century Italy is open to debate, Hind does indicate the type of perfection towards which Saint-Gaudens was aiming. To achieve such a goal was impossible because of the difference in artistic climate, despite the integrity with which Saint-Gaudens worked. He was sensitive to the problems of light and shade as Hind suggested. It was a sensitivity nurtured by his cameo cutting and his academic education. Saint-Gaudens' mastery of the bas-relief technique is especially evident in the few double portraits that he did such as the portrait of the Howells (described below) or that of Mr. and Mrs. MacVeagh in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Homer Saint-Gaudens pointed out the inherent difficulties when he explained that in conventional medallions the head was modeled with consideration for light coming "over the shoulder", while double portraits required that both profiles look well in any light.

The medallion of Mildred Howells in the Gardner collection is a modified detail for the finished double portrait called *William Dean Howells and his daughter, Mildred*, now in the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. The first version of the medal was an oval detail of the young woman (vertical diameter, 21 inches; horizontal diameter,  $20\frac{7}{8}$  inches); the Gardner version, of the head alone, measures  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. Both heads in the double portrait are completely successful. The face of Mildred Howells is built out of shadow, that of Mr. Howells is formed with more emphasis on the facial highlights. They are in contrast with each other depending on the light in which they are viewed. In the plaque the author, seated at the right, faces his daughter across a table. Both figures are in strict profile, she resting her chin on her hand — an element removed from the Gardner medallion. The large plaque shows the degree of detail and concern for textural differentiation which typifies Saint-Gaudens' work. Howells' suit is quitethoroughly sketched out and his



hair and facial features appear worked and re-worked. The details of his tie and his pince-nez laniard are clearly drawn. One notices the attention given to Miss Howells' blouse with the myriad folds of the bodice and 'leg-of-mutton' sleeves and the care with which her hair and its fastenings were treated. There is little evidence of abstraction. Even the extraneous details of the chairs and table are precisely realistic, as is the modeling of the papers from which Howells reads. The composition and execution remind one of an illustrator's work. The neat lettering of the inscription on the original plaque and on the version at the Gardner museum add to the formality and refinement of the work. It is a more characteristic example of Saint-Gaudens' relief portrait style.

Similar to the circumstances surrounding the Sargent medallion, Saint-Gaudens asked his friend Howells and his daughter to sit for him. This was in the spring of 1897; it was finished the next year. The portrait probably provided the sculptor with a change from the large commissions on which he was working: the Shaw Memorial for the Boston Common and the Sherman statue for New York's Central Park. Howells, an author perhaps best known for his novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, was greatly admired by Saint-Gaudens. They had met prior to 1890 and remained friends until the sculptor died in 1907.

It is interesting to note that despite the lapse of seventeen years between the Sargent medal and the Howells plaque, Saint-Gaudens' style remained essentially the same. There is, throughout his life, a development only in competency; there is little indication of change in approach. The Saint-Gaudens who quickly worked up a medallion of Sargent, also, with more time and consideration of detail, rendered the Howells' portraits. This attention to detail and refinement was overcome in but one piece: the figure called "Grief" of the Adams Memorial. This figure, over any other, will be called the sculptor's masterpiece. It is imbued with a monumental simplicity and the psychological power of Rodin, a point that Hind seems to have discounted or not fully appreciated when he wrote:

"Taste and sobriety were the characteristics of Saint-Gaudens' work. He had a horror of the melodramatic or extremes of any kind. . . . His prepossession was with grace, sweetness, spirituality, refinement, whatsoever you choose to call his essential quality. . . . I believe he was quite out of sympathy with the passion and pathos of Rodin. . . ." (op. cit., p. 22).

The sober refinement of the two medallions in the Gardner collection reflect both Saint-Gaudens' taste and his environment.

Although the classical approach may have seemed individualistic to his contemporaries, Saint-Gaudens' work today appears in keeping with the dry, intellectual approach of the Academy. Those qualities of superficial decoration worked into architecture by Richardson and McKim, Mead and White; the esoteric qualities in Sargent's murals and the paintings of LaFarge; the stagnant sculpture of French and MacMonnies are translated into the bas-reliefs of Augustus Saint-Gaudens. They mark him as a man of his era.

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## BERMEJO'S *RETABLO* OF S. ENGRACIA

In the year 304, Engracia, a Christian princess of Portugal, was embarked upon a journey to visit her fiancé in Roussillon. It was necessary to pass through Zaragoza, then governed by the cruel Roman Proconsul Dacian. The latter, who delighted in persecuting Christians, apprehended Engracia and her seventeen retainers as they entered the city. The young woman held firm to her beliefs, and denounced the evil Roman even as he threatened her. In retaliation, Dacian imprisoned Engracia, and gleefully subjected her to a series of atrocious tortures: she was whipped, tied nude to a horse and dragged, head downwards through the city streets, and one of her breasts was cut off. Finally, after a spell of being starved in an underground dungeon, she was killed by means of driving a spike through her forehead. For good measure, Dacian also murdered her entire entourage.

Though not an important saint, Engracia had a small but constant cult through Aragon (which includes the city of Zaragoza) and the Pyrenees region of France from the fourth century onwards. This increased measurably after 1389, when the Roman sarcophagus containing her remains was rediscovered. An additional boost to her popularity came after the year 1468 when Juan II, king of Aragon, claimed that the cataracts which had dulled his vision were miraculously removed upon contact with the nail which had killed Engracia. (He neglected to give equal tribute to his Moorish doctor who had performed an operation upon them at the same time.) The king donated a large sum of money to build a convent dedicated to the saint, and her image appears in several Aragonese paintings and sculptured works of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The large representation of Engracia in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum was painted during this period of renewed interest in her cult. Originally it was the central panel of a big altarpiece. Fifteenth century Spanish altarpieces, *retablos*, followed a more or less set format: a central effigy of the titular saint of the work was flanked by two or more smaller panels bearing narrative scenes from the life of the saint. These subsidiary narratives were usually about half the size of the central image, and stacked, two or three at a time, at its sides. Below this group there would be a predella of small panels depicting half-length or seated saints, more often than not unconnected with the main personage. The predella might instead be occupied by episodes from the life of Christ. A panel bearing a representation of the crucifixion would cap the central image. All of these panels were united and joined by an elaborate gilded frame, usually heavily ornamented with gothic tracery.

The Gardner Engracia is fortunate in that almost the complete complement of panels which accompanied it, making up the original *retablo*, survive. The capping Crucifixion, the predella, and half of one of the narrative scenes (representing Engracia's imprisonment) are in the Museo de la Colegiata, Daroca. There are also two other panels with episodes from the saint's life: the Flagellation of Engracia in the Museo de Pinturas, Bilbao, and the Arrest of Engracia in the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery.

The Arrest and Imprisonment scenes have almost the same cast of characters. In the first instance (figure 3), the princess, astride a horse, is being taken into custody by the villainous Dacian, also mounted. A group of ruffians jeer and leer at the poor girl. This is true *grand guignol* melodrama. In front of the stage setting of a medieval town, the evil-intentioned crowd (pagan Romans here redefined as those modern infidels, the Moors) make quite a contrast to the young girl and the noble figure of one of her courtiers, seen just behind her at left. The same histrionics continue in the Imprisonment panel (figure 4).

The Flagellation (figure 5) shows the poor princess nude to the waist, her hands bound to a column, her back already touched by the glowering torturer. He is winding up for another blow, as the sniggering Dacian and his crony look on approvingly.

Engracia, whose expressions in these scenes range from the unperturbed to the mildly distressed, bears up under these rigors with the dignity which finds even more eloquent expression in the center panel.

The Gardner painting (figure 1) shows the saint in a far more formal aspect. Engracia is a princess, and in the manner of late Gothic painters throughout Europe, she is depicted in contemporary dress. Her





Figure 1. S. Engracia, central panel of St. Engracia *retablo*. Oil on panel,  $64\frac{1}{4} \times 28\frac{1}{2}$  (1.63 x 0.72). The top and sides of the throne are slightly damaged. The inscriptions on the shoe *IRFM* and *NOV* are doubtless only decorative. Bought by Mrs. Gardner at the Somzée sale, Brussels, May 1904.

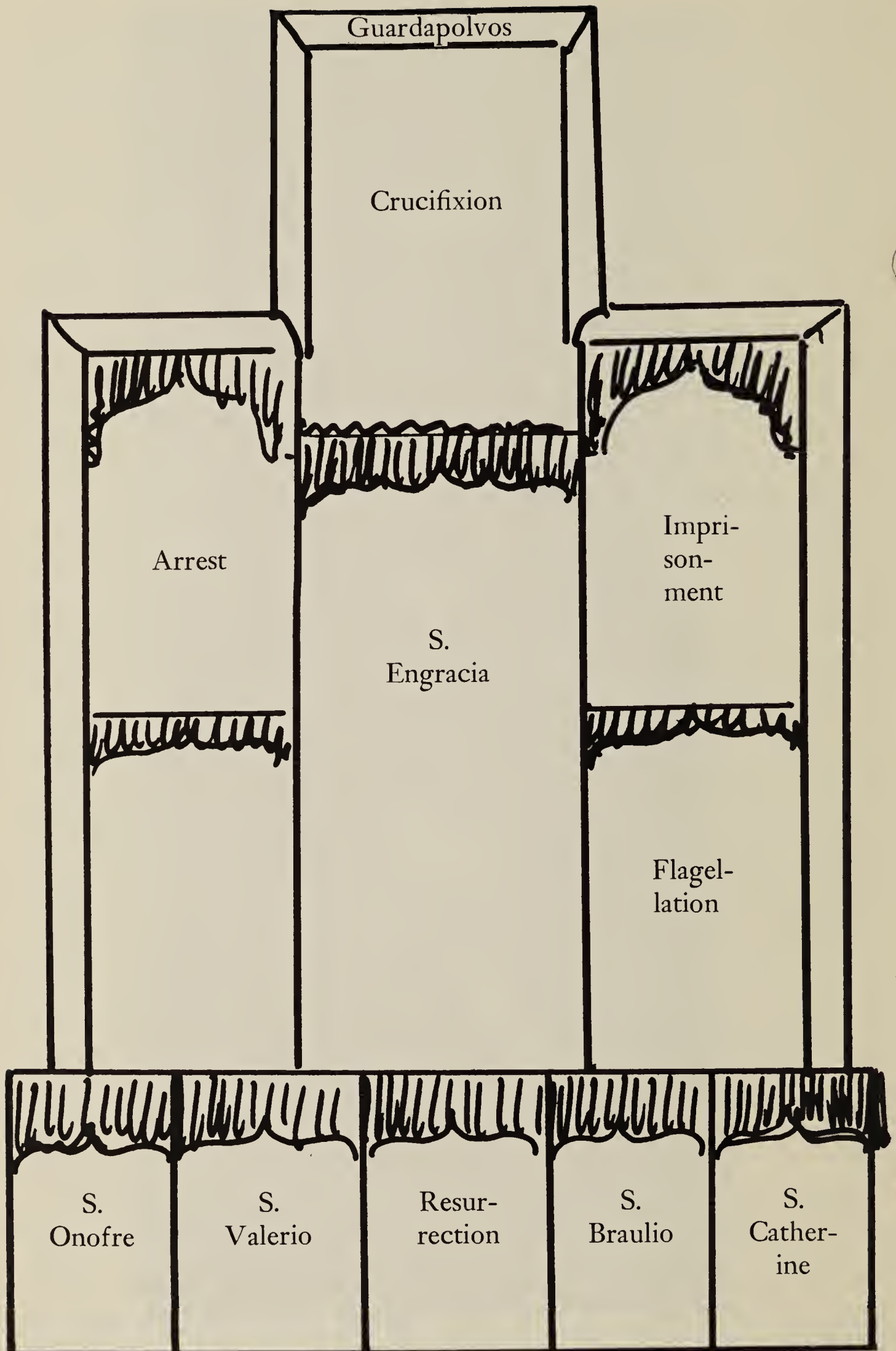


Figure 2. Hypothetical reconstruction of St. Engracia retablo.





Figure 3. The Arrest of S. Engracia. San Diego Fine Arts Gallery.





*Figure 4.* The Imprisonment of S. Engracia (fragment). Museo de la Colegiata, Daroca.





Figure 5. The Flagellation of S. Engracia. Museo de Pinturas, Bilbao.



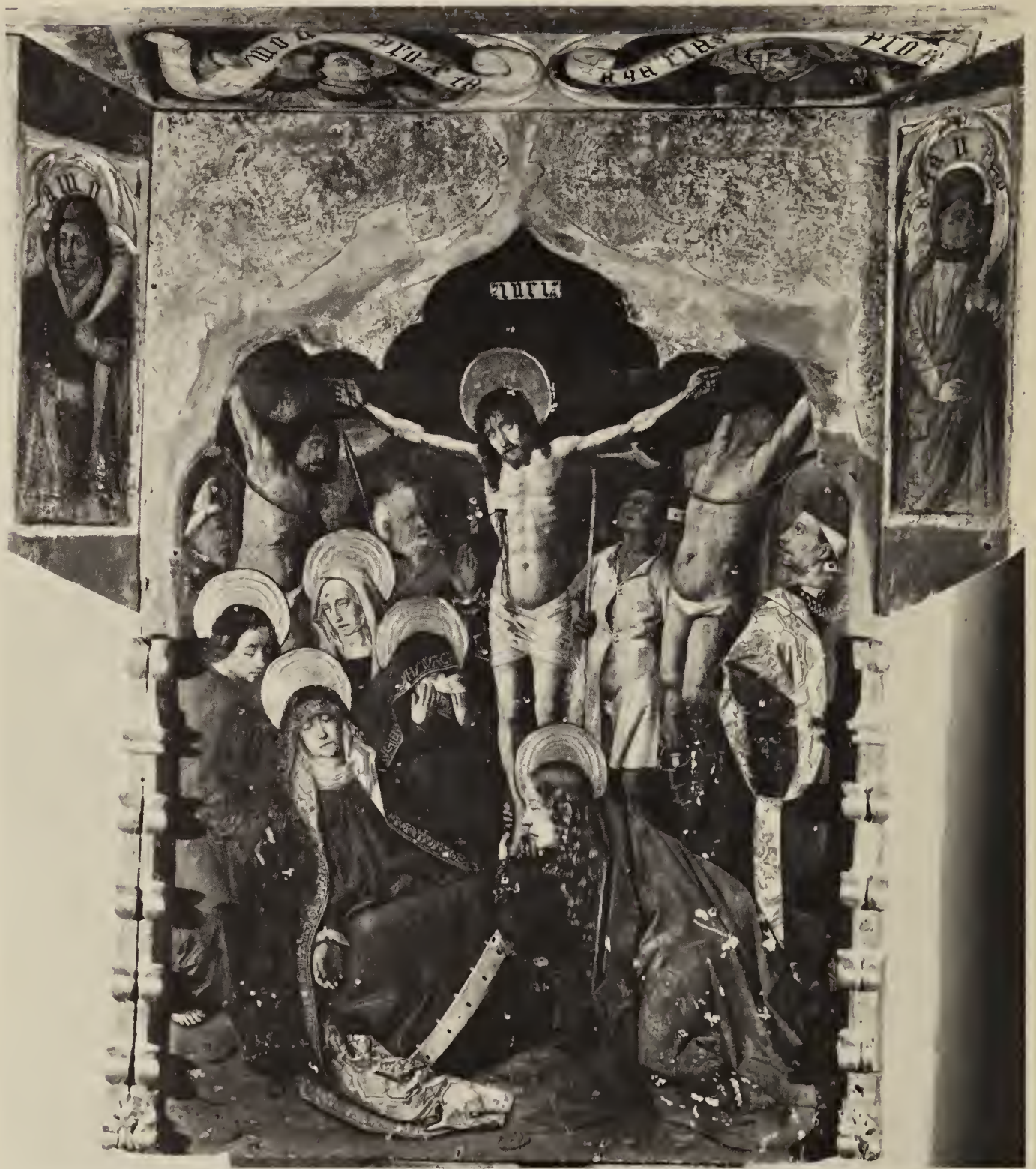


Figure 6. Crucifixion. *Retablo* of S. Engracia, Museo de la Colegiata, Daroca.





Figure 7. S. Domingo de Silos, central panel of *retablo* of S. Domingo de Silos (1474-77). Prado, Madrid.



costume is that of an Aragonese noblewoman of the 1470's: a brocaded dress with a wine velvet and ermine jacket and an underskirt of the same material. Her cloak, jewel-trimmed, is blue, with a green brocade lining. Her hair, braided into two plaits and wound forwards and upwards, is covered by a transparent wimple and an elaborate headdress of wine velvet embroidered with beads, and surmounted by a crown.

Engracia stands in a throne-like niche of dark wood with golden marquetry inlay, in front of a gold background. She holds a martyr's palm and the large spike with which she was martyred. Her halo is gilded, and actually stands away from the surface of the panel. It is molded of concentric rings of gesso.

The author of this panel, and of the whole altarpiece, is Bartolomé de Cárdenas, called "el Bermejo." The career of this artist spans less than thirty years, and relatively little is known about him. He is thought to have been born in Córdoba, but his artistic activity is restricted to the Spanish regions which made up the Kingdom of Aragon. He was documented in Valencia in 1468, in Aragon (Daroca and Zaragoza) from 1474 to 1481, and in Barcelona from 1486 to 1495. Neither his birth nor death date is known.

The S. Engracia *retablo* dates from the artist's Aragonese period. Before the entire group of panels from the altar was known, it was thought that the central image had perhaps made up part of a *retablo* from the Convent of S. Engracia in Zaragoza. This was further strengthened by the fact that the Gardner panel had a tradition of being rescued from Zaragoza's Palacio de la Justicia at the time of the religious suppressions in Spain during the 1830's.

It now seems far more probable that the altarpiece came originally from Daroca. The latter, a walled town some forty miles south of Zaragoza, boasted nine churches and several convents in the fifteenth century. The evidence of so many panels which pertain to the Engracia *retablo* in the Colegiata Museum (which is made up of paintings from many of the Daroca churches which have since vanished) speaks for the probability that the altarpiece was made for this city. Although none of the churches was dedicated to Engracia, the *retablo* could well have graced one of the side chapels of any of them.

In addition, the intervention of a second hand, an anonymous artist who painted the *guardapolvos* (small painted dustguards) on the capping Crucifixion (figure 6), speaks for a Daroca provenance. This same artist had executed a large portion of a *retablo* dedicated to S. Martin, a Bermejo school piece also executed for Daroca, and now in the Colegiata Museum.



The Convent of S. Engracia in Zaragoza, the most logical destination for an altarpiece dedicated to the saint, was not built until the sixteenth century, despite Juan II's donation. On the other hand, although Bermejo resided in Zaragoza from 1477 to 1481, he had lived first in Daroca in 1474, where he was engaged in painting yet another *retablo*, dedicated to S. Domingo de Silos, the center panel of which is now in the Prado. The artist must have retained ties with Daroca too, since some time before 1481 he married a widow of the town, Grazia de Palaciano. Taken together, then, the evidence is quite strong in favor of a Daroca provenance for the Engracia *retablo*.

The Gardner panel is one of the best representatives of Bermejo's style. Very characteristic is the exquisite and subtle detailing of the work. The viewer is confronted with lovely glittering jewels, varying fabrics from heavy velvets to transparent gauzes, simulated pearls and gold, the latter contrasted cleverly to the real gold of the background. These qualities, plus the very fact that the painting is executed in oil paint — still not in general use in eastern Spain at this time — serve to link the artist with Flemish painting of the same period. Also Netherlandish is Bermejo's approach to painting as a compendium of details rather than a unified entity. Unlike Italian artists of the same period, he ignores the position of the figure in space. One is never exactly sure of how deep the throne-niche space behind Engracia really is.

On the other hand, there are many qualities in Bermejo's work which are totally Spanish. The subdued wine reds, deep greens, warm browns and ochres, and deep blue are a marked contrast to the rich, bright hues used by Jan van Eyck and Roger van der Weyden.

Spaniards tended to retain gold backgrounds, particularly in formal effigies of saints, long after the Flemings and Italians abandoned them. Bermejo used this device here, and added an embossed foliate pattern in the Valencian manner at its borders. Like many of his compatriots, however, our artist utilized this gold — and the inherent flatness of it — to enhance a beautifully organized formal composition. The figure of Engracia herself is a series of trapezoids: one formed by her headdress, one by her body, one by the inner borders of her cloak, and another by the portion of her dress which she holds in her hand. Her body gently swings in a Gothic curve. The artist mitigates the flatness of the gold by placing the throne-niche between the figure and the ground, so that the contrast between the amazing detailing on the saint's garment and the flat gold is not too abrupt, as it often is in German paintings of the same period. The halo is raised from the ground and performs a similar function as the throne.

In his perfect adaptation of a Flemish oil technique to a Spanish aesthetic, Bermejo reaches a perfection in a late Gothic type which few of his countrymen were able to achieve. He is at his best in these formal compositions, as can be seen not only in the S. Engracia, but also in the Prado S. Domingo de Silos (figure 7) and the slightly earlier S. Michael of the Wernher Collection in Luton Hoo.

Bermejo tends to be weaker in his narratives, letting his love of detail overpower him. The Flagellation panel, for example, has a strangely sloping floor, but the artist has paid great attention to the tiny spider-webs in the corners of the walls!

In the predella, which boasts five panels representing S. Onofre, S. Valerio (?), the Resurrection, S. Braulio and S. Catherine of Siena, he is somewhat more successful. The beautiful landscape in the S. Catherine panel points towards Bermejo's late style, which culminates in 1490 with the great Pietà of Canon Desplà (Barcelona Cathedral Museum). It is the Engracia *retablo*, however, and particularly the lovely Gardner panel, which best typifies the painter's early and middle style.

JUDITH F. BERG

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# FENWAY COURT

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## JAPANESE SCREENS—I

For the most part, Oriental objects in the collection were acquired after the museum was built. Although Mr. and Mrs. Gardner visited the East in 1883 it was twenty years before Mrs. Gardner's interest in Oriental art led to major acquisitions, and the collection then formed was neither broad nor deep. Of the museum's twelve traditional Japanese screen paintings, almost all came from sales held in Boston during the first decade of this century. Perhaps because they were added after the rooms were filled, these screens were placed in narrow corridors and high on the wall, and are, therefore, difficult for the visitor to see. The screens have recently been photographed and studied, providing an opportunity to present a selection of the Oriental painting in the collection to readers of this journal. A pair of screens on *The Tale of Genji* and a screen called *The Vinegar Tasters* are dealt with here.

In the upper case of the third floor passage are the scenes from the Tale of Genji (fig. 1). These screen paintings about Prince Genji show something of the court life in tenth-century Japan. The book itself, one of the great literary works of the world, was written around 1,000 A.D. by Lady Murasaki. (An English translation was made in this century by Arthur Waley.)

In the twelfth century, the story was made into an *emaki*, or a painted hand-scroll by Fujiwara Takayoshi, a painter who served the Imperial family, and his fellow artists and students. (The only surviving parts of the original are owned by the Tokugawa Reimeikan Foundation, Tokyo and Gotoh Art Museum, Tokyo.) As the Tale of Genji became popular, the scenes from the novel were frequently used for screen paintings. Many artists, who had never read the novel — which contains fifty-four chapters and nearly five hundred characters — relied on a digest of the Painted Scroll of the Tale of Genji made in the fourteenth century. It describes the characters in each scene as well as their

costumes. Exact quotations are often given to go with the scene. Masters of different schools of art painted the scenes from the Tale of Genji according to the instructions given in this digest. (The only surviving parts of the digest are at the Osaka City Women's College.)

*Emaki* or *emakimono* literally means picture scroll. A *kakemono* is a vertical scroll; an *emaki* is the scroll of horizontal or traverse format. The viewer lays it on floor or table, unrolling it from the left, and rolling it up on the right. The viewer only sees that portion of the scroll between his hands. Originally used in ancient China to illustrate sutras and customs, the *emaki* developed in Japan to illustrate stories when, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, the formation of Japanese letters called '*hiragana*' helped to produce a number of literary works, particularly among the court ladies, and the decline of the Chinese T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-907) gave Japan a cultural independence.

Unlike painting which describes one moment in time, *emaki* presents a complete story, and the artists were extremely careful to give a fluid narrative to the design. Because *emaki* is viewed from above, a diagonal bird's-eye view dictates the angle of perspective, which is geometrically inaccurate. In the museum's screen painting of the Tale of Genji, clouds are used to separate one scene from the other. Roofs and ceilings are removed and only the horizontals and verticals of doorways, floors, pillars and beams are inserted to permit one to see into two or three rooms at the same time.

The Gardner screen painting is signed *Fujiwara Tsunenobu* (1636-1713), *the first month of the fifth year of Empō* (1677). The seal also bears the name Tsunenobu. He was a leading artist of the Kano school in the Edo period (1615-1867). Although the general layout is gracefully done, figures and details, such as the mural paintings on the walls of rooms, lack the master's touch. This is probably a work of the Tsunenobu studio. Many screens were painted to respond to the great demands of the market. The preliminary drawing was done by the master in black ink with a fine brush, and this was then painted in with pigments. The original outlines, now concealed by paint, were gone over with jet-black ink. During this process, the original drawing was often replaced by the work of an assistant.

In the first screen, the top part of the first two panels on the right illustrates an event in the first chapter called 'Kiritsubo' where the ceremony of Prince Genji's Initiation took place when he was twelve years old. The lower part illustrates Genji, then sixteen, and his constant companion Tō-no-Chūjō and other men, reading love letters which were sent to Genji and discussing women at the palace on a rainy night. This appears in the second chapter called 'Broom-tree'. The upper part



of the third panel is from the 'Waka-Murasaki' chapter. Prince Genji has gone to the country to be cured by a hermit. He is attended by Lord Koremitsu and a page and is seen peering through a brushwood fence at Murasaki, a girl of about ten. She is looking after her pet sparrow which her page has just set free. The lower part of the four panels on the left illustrates the chapter of the 'Festival of Red Leaves' at which Prince Genji and Tō-no-Chūjō dance. The upper part of the two panels on the left deals with 'Battle of the Carriages' from the 'Aoi' chapter. There is to be a procession in connection with the ceremonies for the purification of the Virgin Priestess of Ise. The carriage of Princess Rokujō has to be pushed out of the way to make room for that of Lady Aoi. A fight between their grooms ensues.

In the other screen, the middle part of the first two panels on the right illustrates Prince Genji and his page, peering through the curtains at the lady playing *go*, a kind of chess, with her friend. The top part of the first four panels illustrates an incident in the 'Miotsukushi' chapter where Genji visits Sumiyoshi Shrine on his way back from Akashi. He came to thank the deity for the birth of his daughter. In the picture below, Genji enjoys a summer evening with his friends in a room built over the pond. The upper part of the last two panels illustrates the 'Wakana' chapter where Kashiwagi plays ball with others, as Princess Nyosan comes after her cat. The lower part of the last two panels shows Genji listening to the music played by the court ladies.

*The Vinegar Tasters* symbolizes the unity of the three Oriental religions, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The Chinese artists presented this idea by painting the founders of the three religions together. By showing them tasting the same vinegar, the artist implied that their teachings will lead us to the same path, in spite of their different approaches. Although the drink they are tasting is usually translated as vinegar, it is a kind of wine made from peach blossoms and is often used to entertain guests. The vinegar tasters were often replaced by Huan T'ing-chien (1045-1105), a Taoist, Su Shih (1036-1101), a Confucianist, and Liao-yüan (1030-1098), a Buddhist.

The theme met an enthusiastic welcome among the Japanese Zen monks of the Ashikaga period (1392-1568). The theme as well as the satiric grins on the tasters' faces was appreciated as a Zen expression, a humorous yet profound interpretation of the philosophy of life. The demand for paintings on the same subject was so keen that it was natural that the Vinegar Tasters soon became one of the favorite subjects of the Kano artists who were under the patronage of the Ashikaga *shōguns*, actual rulers of that period. The Kano school was started by Masanobu (1434-1530) who learned his technique from Sung China's so-called







*Figure 1. THE TALE OF GENJI. Tsunenobu studio; pair of six-fold paper screens, full color on gold; signed and dated: Fujiwara Tsunenobu, 1677. 5 ft. 7 in. x 12 ft. 5 in. (1.70 x 3.79 m.). Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.*





*Figure 2.* THE VINEGAR TASTERS. Kano Yukinobu (1513-1575); ink and slight color on paper; 3 ft.  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. x 1 ft. 8  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (0.92 x 0.53 m.). Reproduced in *NIHONGA TAISEI* vol. 5, plate 53, Tōhō-Shoin, Tokyo, 1931. Whereabouts unknown.



*Figure 4.* STRAY SHEEP. Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958); 1902; charcoal drawing on silk, coated with glue; 6 ft. x 4 ft. 4  $\frac{3}{5}$  in. (1.83 x 1.34 m.). Reproduced in *TAIKAN YOKOYAMA*, plate 10, Otsuka Kōgeisha, Tokyo, 1958. Whereabouts unknown.



*Figure 3.* THE VINEGAR TASTERS. Anonymous early 18th century; two-fold paper screen, full color on gold; no signature or seal. 5 ft. 6 in. x 6 ft. 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (1.675 x 1.87 m.). Purchased by Mrs. Gardner at the Matsuki sale, Boston, 1901.



“northern school” paintings. Motonobu (1476-1559), his eldest son, turned the Chinese tradition into a Japanese art expression and laid the foundation for a school which lasted late into the nineteenth century, and played an important role in the history of Japanese art. Charmed by the powerful brush-stroke of the Kano school, warrior politicians patronized the artists generation after generation.

Whenever art was introduced from the Asian mainland, Japanese artists imitated technique as well as style. Each school of art kept the early copies of the masterpieces, and younger generations developed their artistic skill by copying them. These reproductions were called *fumpon*, or free-hand copies usually made in India ink although colors were added if the artist needed a more precise record of the Japanese original. The *fumpon* of popular subjects were used again and again by a number of art students. The *fumpon* of the Vinegar Tasters was no exception. Among the paintings of the Vinegar Tasters, there is a work by Kano Yukinobu (1513-1575). It depicts Śākya-muni in the center and Confucius and Lao-tzu on the right and left sides respectively (fig. 2). The artist ignored the historical background of Śākya-muni and painted him as a Chinese Buddhist monk, either for the compositional technique, or because the artist was influenced by the original Chinese painting. It is very likely that the artist of *The Vinegar Tasters* in the Gardner Museum (fig. 3) copied the *fumpon* of the Yukinobu version but in adjusting the subject to a two-fold screen, the artist gave a variation of his own, separating Lao-tzu from the other figures. This alteration changed the effect of the Yukinobu version. In the latter, Lao-tzu plays the role of host, holding a spoon of vinegar for his guests. They taste it as they stare at the host, who watches them intently with his mouth tightly shut. Yukinobu painted their facial expressions so vividly that one can almost hear their conversation.

In the Gardner painting (second floor passage), Lao-tzu was moved from the group to the left corner, transforming the host to a late-comer who has not yet tasted the vinegar. The artist seems to have chosen the easiest way to change a standing figure to a walking one by simply removing Lao-tzu's left foot. As a result, his body looks unstable which detracts from the eager gesture of the extended right hand. Confucius' broad grin has changed to a conventional expression of a vinegar taster's. Buddha's face also lacks the subtle grin of the Yukinobu version. Yukinobu expressed the spirit of the subject matter skilfully and artistically, in the vivid facial expressions, and in the symbolical triangle design, whereas the copier not only failed to convey the story, but also reduced the whole scheme into a conventional screen painting.

As a rule an artist did not put his name on a screen painting, and there

is no signature or seal on this screen; but it is obvious that this painting was copied from the original work of a Kano artist. Although the date is unknown, it seems to belong to the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Retouching, done most likely for the sale in Boston, may be seen on the branches of the pine-tree and ivy vines, and on Confucius' face as well as the lines of his robe. The jar, for instance, lacks in the gracefulness of the Yukinobu jar. The back of the screen seems to have been restored and the original frame was replaced by an ordinary wooden frame. It appears that more gold dust was applied later to cover the fading green of pine needles and ivy leaves.

The idea of the unity of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, which is expressed in this painting, still exists in the Far East. As Okakura Kakuzo, a close friend of Mrs. Gardner's and one time curator of the Asiatic Department of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, said in one of his lectures given at his museum: "Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism exist in Eastern Asia side by side. We rely upon Confucius for ethics, we rely upon Lao-tzu for aesthetics, we rely upon Buddha for religion. We pursue our daily life in Confucianism, our artistic life is conducted in Taoism, and we die and are buried in Buddhism." (From his lecture entitled: "Religions in East Asiatic Art.")

Yokoyama Taikan, an artist who accompanied Okakura Kakuzo to America in 1904, made a charcoal drawing of this subject with Christ among the above three teachers, and he placed a Japanese child in the center of the group. The title of this painting is *Stray Sheep* (fig. 4). The religious confusion of the Meiji Restoration of a century ago, when western thought flooded into Japan after three centuries of isolation, is symbolized in the perplexed child now faced with four religions.

YASUKO HORIOKA

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# FENWAY COURT

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## TONDO FROM A WORKSHOP OF 1490

THE CIRCULAR PANEL (tondo) in the Long Gallery, which shows the Holy Family and two shepherds in an open landscape (fig. 1) is not unknown among scholars. It is sometimes attributed to Alessandro Botticelli (1444/5-1510), but generally only accepted as a product of his workshop. Joseph, half squatting, half kneeling, laying down or lifting up the infant Christ, is depicted in a most unusual position. His heavy head, his robustly modelled face, the monumental, overall conception of this enormous figure immediately recall Michelangelo (1475-1564). The tondo is not the work of one hand. An able assistant of Botticelli's may have painted the pure botticellesque Madonna and landscape after a design of his master. These parts of the tondo can be dated around or a little later than 1490 for stylistic relations to sure works of Botticelli.

The remarkable quality of this tondo has been repeatedly observed, and the stylistic differences also mentioned, which exist between the Madonna and the comparatively much more broadly designed, mighty figure of Joseph. Only the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum catalogues note clearly that the painting does not seem to be by one artist. Philip Hendy was right when he observed in 1931 that "in the ample design and stiff material of S. Joseph's robe, in the type of the child" we are reminded of Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494); this applies equally to the mode of painting of the tondo. At the height of his career, Domenico Ghirlandaio, the most popular painter of his time in Florence, employed more than a dozen assistants, pupils and helpers in his workshop. Among these was the ingenious boy Michelangelo. Hendy's hypothesis, that Ghirlandaio's mediocre assistant Sebastiano Mainardi (c. 1450-1513) "may have had a hand in this panel," is not convincing. In the works of



*Figure 1.* Botticelli workshop, THE HOLY FAMILY AND TWO SHEPHERDS, Tempera on panel, diameter 30 inches (0.76 meters). General condition relatively good: only the mantle of the Madonna is damaged; the face of the Child, the left temple, the hands, the clothing of Joseph and the skin of the shepherds have been retouched. Formerly in the collection of the duke of Brindisi in the Antinori Palace, Florence. Purchased in 1900 for Mrs. Gardner.



*Figure 2.* Masaccio, detail from THE STORY OF THE TRIBUTE MONEY, Brancacci chapel, church of S. Maria del Carmine, Florence. S. Peter squatting beside the lake, taking the tribute money from the belly of the fish.



*(photograph by Alinari)*



*Figure 3.* Drawing by Michelangelo, a copy of the figure of S. Peter from Masaccio's fresco, the Brancacci chapel, Florence. Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich.



Mainardi — as well as in the works of Ghirlandaio's other assistants and pupils of secondary importance — there is no figure of the same quality and monumental size as Joseph.

In the composition of tondos in which the Madonna kneels as a large figure in the foreground, the main theme of the picture is always her adoration of the infant Christ who is lying before her. The praying or sleeping Joseph is usually added to this group as a figure of subordinated rank. In the Gardner panel, on the contrary, Joseph fascinates us as an active person almost equally as important as Mary, in a way which we do not find in earlier painting. The unresolved tension between the two main figures, *i. e.* between the broadly designed plastic character of Joseph and the linear ornamental character of the Madonna, and also the unsatisfying area of the middle distance seem to indicate clearly that the design of the picture is not the work of one artist. The tondo was not only executed by different hands — that often happened in the workshops — but was also designed by different artists. This is astonishing. Apparently there was an outsider in Botticelli's workshop who was allowed to complete parts of this panel in accordance with his own ideas.

In the twenties of the fifteenth century, Masaccio (1401-1428) created the new Renaissance style in painting. To his frescoes with the stories of SS. Peter and Paul in the Brancacci chapel, which were most highly esteemed from the beginning, belongs the scene of the tribute money. In the Gardner tondo Joseph is obviously a free transformation of Masaccio's figure of Peter squatting beside the lake (fig. 2).

In his *Lives* of the artists Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) tell us the names of all those who studied the new powerful style of Masaccio. Among them is the name of Michelangelo. That Vasari was right and that Michelangelo was especially interested in the fresco of the tribute money is shown by a famous drawing in Munich (fig. 3). In copying the figure of Peter paying the tribute money the young Michelangelo brings more life into the stiff attitude of his older prototype. The stylistic differences between the Munich drawing and Masaccio's source correspond to those between the Joseph in the tondo and the squatting figure of Peter. In both cases we find the same animation of the pose, the differentiation of the feeling, size and shape, the changes in the robes (the enlargement of the sleeves, the seam at the shoulder, the cuff), the enriching of the folds. The Peter of the Munich drawing and the Joseph of the Gardner panel look like brothers with their serious, almost severe features and with their heavy physique. The foot of Joseph in our tondo seems to be an awkward first step toward





*(photograph by Alinari)*

*Figure 4.* Michelangelo, THE HOLY FAMILY (the Doni tondo), Uffizi, Florence.





*Figure 5.* Michelangelo, detail from SEPARATION OF THE EARTH AND WATERS, Sistine chapel, Vatican, Rome.  
(*photograph by Alinari*)





Figure 6. Detail of figure 1.



the foot of Joseph in Michelangelo's "Doni" Holy Family (c. 1505) (fig. 4) and has many analogies to the seated figures of the Sistine ceiling (1508-1512) in Rome (e. g. Ezekiel).

Perhaps the relationship of these and other details could already justify an attribution of the figure of Joseph to the young Michelangelo. Above all, the monumental conception of Joseph, his voluminous, sculptured physique, his *terribilità*, his transitory motion caught at the moment of greatest exertion (this is also peculiar to Joseph in the Doni tondo) permit us to recognize a work of Michelangelo in this Masaccio adaptation. This wise old giant belongs to the sphere of Michelangelo's Doni Joseph, of his Matthew in Florence (c. 1505) and to that of God the Father (Creation of the Stars, and Separation of the Earth and Waters) (fig. 5) and of the prophet Jeremiah (fig. 7) in the Sistine chapel.

The Child and the shepherds do not have the artistic significance of Joseph. In his facial expression the youthful shepherd resembles Michelangelo's candlestick angel and Proculus in Bologna, the figure of Bacchus in Florence and one of the angels in the "Manchester Madonna" in London (fig. 8) (all done in the nineties of the fifteenth century). The traditional position in which the old shepherd is holding his hand is also found in one of Giotto's frescoes, from which Michelangelo copied. The grouping of the figures in pairs in the middle distance of the Gardner picture can also be seen in Michelangelo's Madonna of the Steps in Florence (c. 1490-92) and in the Doni tondo.

All these elements point toward Michelangelo. Now there is the question of the relation between Botticelli and Michelangelo. We do not know much about it. From the time the boy Michelangelo was supported by Lorenzo de' Medici, called "the Magnificent" (in the late eighties), he must have known Botticelli, who often worked for members of the Medici family. In 1496 Michelangelo addressed a letter to Botticelli. Why should Botticelli not have offered the young Medici favorite an opportunity to carry on artistic work in his workshop?

Michelangelo, who, according to Vasari, "drew many months with much judgment" in the Brancacci chapel, was probably fascinated by Masaccio's squatting figure of Peter in the same way as Vasari. To reshape it into the figure of Joseph was a stroke of genius. This, and the quality of the execution of Joseph, both allow us to recognize in it Michelangelo's own hand. The clumsy and often not rhythmic character of the figure reveals the artist's youth. Michelangelo's authorship is further indicated by the fact that as a model for Joseph a figure of particular physical tension was chosen. Michelangelo's apprenticeship





Figure 7. Michelangelo, THE PROPHET JEREMIAH, Sistine chapel, Vatican, Rome.  
(photograph by Alinari)





*(reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London)*

*Figure 8.* Michelangelo (?), MADONNA AND CHILD WITH S. JOHN AND ANGELS, (unfinished) called the "Manchester Madonna", National Gallery, London.





*(reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London)*

*Figure 9. Detail of figure 8.*



*Figure 10. Detail of figure 1.*

in Ghirlandaio's workshop explains the Ghirlandaiesque appearance of Joseph. Michelangelo probably worked on this tondo around the year 1490.

If our hypothesis is correct, the Gardner Museum owns in this very interesting and problematic panel one of the first artistic attempts of Michelangelo as a painter.

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fig. 1 = Holst, in *Pantheon*,  
Sept.-Oct. 1967, fig. 1

fig. 2 = *Pantheon*, fig. 4

fig. 3 = *Pantheon*, fig. 2

fig. 4 = *Tolnay I*, fig. 59

fig. 5 = *Tolnay II*, fig. 57

fig. 6 = *Pantheon*, fig. 5

fig. 7 = *Tolnay II*, fig. 64 or 72

fig. 8 = *Tolnay I*, fig. 278

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an abridged form of an article which appeared in a German revue of history of art, in *Pantheon*, September and October 1967, pages 329-335. Tolnay refers to *Michelangelo*, by Charles de Tolnay, Princeton University Press.

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# FENWAY COURT

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## JAPANESE SCREENS—II

**I**N THE SECOND FLOOR STAIR HALL of the Gardner Museum, there are two six-fold screens with a grape-vine design (fig. 1) and an eight-fold screen depicting two horsemen (fig. 3). They were purchased by Mrs. Gardner at the Matsuki Sale in Boston in 1902. Each reflects in its own way the Momoyama period (1568-1615), the most flourishing age of Japanese screens.

The Momoyama period came after long years of war and social turmoil. Under the rule of Hideyoshi (1537-1598), gold was mined on a large scale, new castles were built and shrines and temples were restored everywhere. Catholic missionaries from Portugal and Spain came bringing western art in the form of altarpieces. The abundant use of gold in these religious paintings impressed the Japanese artists. A keen demand for screen and mural paintings to decorate restored buildings created a unique period in the history of Japanese art, rich in gold and grand in style. The use of gold leaf in Japanese art traces back as far as the middle of the Ashikaga period (1392-1568), but it became predominant in the Momoyama period.

Gold in Christian altarpieces gave the objects a richness calculated to inspire awe, and created the impression of a third dimension, or even the presence of a celestial light. Gold in the Momoyama period was used to shut off perspective for decorative effect. The monochrome *zen* paintings of the Ashikaga period endeavoured to express spiritual depth by perspective; the Momoyama artists aimed at decorativeness in gold and color. With the death of Hideyoshi, the grandeur of the Momoyama period gradually withered away. The work of the Kano school reverted to the rough brush strokes in black ink, the original Kano characteristic adapted from the Chinese, and soon fell into mannerism under the patronage of the Tokugawa shogunate which lasted for a span of three



Figure 1. GRAPE VINES. Anonymous; pair of six-fold paper screens, full color on gold; 5 ft. 3 in. x 10 ft. (1.60 x 3.05 m.). Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

centuries until the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Those who pursued the decorative effect of the Momoyama screen established a decorative school headed first by Sōtatsu, who was active in the beginning of the seventeenth century, and Kōetsu (1558-1637). They were later succeeded by Kōrin (1663-1743). As the center of the nation's economy gradually moved from the *samurai* (warriors) and *daimyō* (feudal nobles) classes to a rising class of the commoners, the *ukiyo-e* or genre pictures in wood block prints became a popular form of Japanese art in the Edo period (1615-1867). The screens in the Gardner Museum are interesting works from the period of transition between the Momoyama and Edo periods.

*Grape Vines* painted on a pair of six-fold screens appear to be a realistic presentation of grape vines covered with broad leaves and laden with clusters of fruit. The thick layers of gold leaves, however, transform this nature into decoration. The silver clouds on top and bottom of the screens frame the design to present gold with unrestrained freedom within this rhythmic outline. The artist aimed at decorative effect by means of color, not by stylization. The artists of the decorative school ignored dark and light as well as perspective. In the *Grape Vines*, the background is painted in dark blue without light or shadow at all. All the leaves are painted purely in gold. It is unfortunate that over the years





*Figure 2.*

Lacquer box with  
ivy design. 1602.  
Itsukushima Shrine,  
Hiroshima. 1 ft.  
6  $\frac{3}{10}$  in. x 1 ft.  
10  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. x 1 ft.  
1  $\frac{2}{5}$  in. (0.467 x  
0.157 x 0.442 m.).



the silver clouds have lost their glitter and heavy overpainting on the background and on clusters of fruit has obscured the original color. The gold leaves, however, still retain much of the original lustre. Working within extremely narrow confines the artist created an object of great beauty. This arrangement seems to be unique among surviving works of the seventeenth century. It was skilfully attained without resorting to abstractions at all. A lacquer box with an ivy motif (fig. 2) made in 1602 is an example of similar design. The screen does not have a signature or a seal, but it would be safe to consider it as a work of a decorative school artist, executed at the end of the Momoyama period.







Figure 3. BATTLE OF THE RIVER UJI. Anonymous; eight-fold paper screen, full color on gold; 3 ft. 9½ in. x 12 ft. 4 in. (1.16 x 3.76 m.). Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

An eight-fold screen on the same wall records a famous historical incident of the twelfth century, The Battle of the River Uji. In 1182, Minamoto Yoritomo, a warrior politician, decided to attack Yoshinaka of the same clan who had allied himself with their opponent, Heike. Informed of the decision, two followers of Yoritomo hurried to the River Uji to be the first knight to cross it in the face of the enemy. Their mounts were the two best horses that Yoritomo owned. Kajiwaras Kagesuye, one of the knights, wanted the horse called *Ikezuki* or Moon-upon-the-Lake, considered the better of the two, but was given the other, *Surusumi* or Polished Ink. Sasaki Takatsuna, the other knight, stole *Ikezuki* at the owner's suggestion. When Sasaki reached the river, a few yards behind his fellow warrior, he called to him "Your saddle girth is loose! Don't fall and be the laughter of the enemy." Hearing this, the young warrior drew in his horse, while the other passed him. In the picture, Kajiwaras is on the left, looking down at the saddle girth, while the other is about to dash into the water triumphantly.

Although the incident occurred in 1182, the earliest pictures of the battle scene are from the late sixteenth century. Most of the existing Uji battle screens were executed in the seventeenth century, no doubt because of the appearance in book form of the ballad dramas called "*jōru-*

*ri*" among which was a series of war stories including "The Battle of the River Uji." Recitation of these accompanied by *samisen* or three-stringed musical instruments became popular with the general public.

Among the screens treating this particular incident is the work by Tosa Mitsuoki (1617-1691) in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum (fig. 4). The Gardner version although signed *Kano Hōgen Motonobu* (1476-1559) on the right edge with *Motonobu* on the seal beneath it, is clearly not by him because of the blackness of the ink. Both signature and seal differ from those that the artist used.

The Gardner screen follows the composition of The Uji Bridge, a common subject among screen paintings in the Momoyama period. Although the prototype of The Uji Bridge design goes back to the Ashikaga period (1392-1568), it won popularity in the Momoyama period. The design was treated similarly by artists of different schools, and many of these are still in existence. Figure 5 is a work of a Kano school artist in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Any prototype of The Uji Bridge screen and the Gardner screen, though different in subject matter, shares the same characteristics in composition as well as in technique. A curved line cuts across the narrow oblong area from the lower right to the upper left, suggesting the scenery beyond the





*Figure 4.* THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER UJI. Attributed to Tosa Mitsuoki; one of a pair of six-fold paper screens, full color on gold; 5 ft. 1 in. x 11  $\frac{4}{5}$  in. (1.551 x 3.654 m.). Tokyo National Museum.

*Figure 5.* THE UJI BRIDGE. Kano school; six-fold paper screen, full color on gold; 4 ft. 10 in. x 10 ft. 0 in. (1.511 x 3.348 m.). The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.





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frame. Highly stylized waves and the gold background create a rich setting for the two figures. These similarities suggest that the artist of the Gardner screen was quite familiar with The Uji Bridge screen paintings and probably with other screens and murals done by the master artists of the Momoyama period. The other screens treating the Uji battle are more or less in the Mitsuoki fashion, both in composition and in the execution of the warriors. They all depict Sasaki calling to his fellow warrior as he attempts to gallop past him, but the Gardner screen depicts Sasaki as already past his fellow warrior and he is painted on the shoreline, half on the gold of the sand and the rest in the stylized waves. Kano elements are seen in the pine-trees, but not in the facial features of the horsemen which do not resemble the work of Mitsuoki either. They seem to belong to a free-lance artist, not connected with any particular school of art. There were many such artists at this time and all of them came from the middle classes. Although they were familiar with the styles of the Kano, Tosa and other schools of art, their efforts went toward the execution of a new art that would appeal to the people. They are called "*machi-eshi*" or town painters. They gained great support from the public. Because of the traces of different styles that reflect the art of Momoyama screens it would be proper to place this artist of the Gardner screen in the middle of the seventeenth century.

*The Legend of Yoshitsune* which includes the "Battle of the River Uji" and other war stories was translated into English by Okakura-Kakuzo, a friend of Mrs. Gardner, for his Bostonian friends. Francis Gardner Curtis, her cousin, put it into poetry. Both manuscripts are now in a case in the Blue Room. The ballad tells of Sasaki: "And today the craft of Sasaki remains a name of dishonor, a knight who lied to his friend to gain an honor."

YASUKO HORIOKA

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# FENWAY COURT

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## JAPANESE SCREENS — III

**A**RTISTS PAINTED ON CEILINGS AND WALLS long before they painted on fabrics. In Japan, sliding doors and panels have been popular supports for painting since the seventh century. Joseph Lindon Smith (1863-1950), artist and friend of Mrs. Gardner's who assisted her in forming her collection, must have been impressed by the pictorial sliding doors of his hotel rooms in Kyoto when he visited that city in 1900. His small picture of his rooms now hangs above the door of the Yellow Room with the title *The State Apartments, Kyoto* (figure 1). Although the building no longer exists, it is likely that many tourists from America stayed there, including Mr. and Mrs. Gardner in 1883. In the painting, a panel is seen in the center, and four sliding doors (two pushed back) called "*fusuma*" are in the foreground. More sets of sliding doors are seen on either side of the room. The sketch did not seem to satisfy Smith's curiosity for Japanese doors because he bought a set of large *fusuma* at the Yamanaka Sale in Boston in 1902. He may not have had space enough to keep them, as they were sold to Mrs. Gardner in 1911. Unfortunately, however, the set of four doors had to be separated. They are now exhibited in the Second Floor Passage, three on the wall opposite the elevator, and one on the east wall above the East Indian embroidery. Figures 2 and 3 show them in the way they would be used in a Japanese room.

*Fusuma*, or sliding doors of wooden frame covered with paper or cloth, came into use in the early Heian period (794-1185). They were used to separate rooms and, at the same time, to decorate them, in living quarters in temples and palaces as well as in ordinary houses. Except for closet doors, they are usually painted on both sides. The artists of the Momoyama period (1568-1615) were employed on sliding doors of newly-built castles and temples, which produced an age of



Figure 1. THE STATE APARTMENTS, KYOTO. Joseph Lindon Smith; oil on canvas. 1 ft. 10½ in. x 2 ft. 4½ in. (0.57 x 0.72 m.).

grandeur in the history of Japanese art. Many of the masterpieces are preserved in the temples in the vicinity of Kyoto and Nara as part of the architecture. For the same reason, the number of *fusuma* paintings found in museums is very small compared with screens and scrolls. Thanks to Joseph Lindon Smith, the Gardner Museum is fortunate to have this set.

These sliding doors must have been from a palace as they are much larger than those used in houses. They seem to belong to the late seventeenth century, during the reign of the Tokugawa rulers. On one side there is a chrysanthemum design and on the other, bamboos. Although both are of equal quality, Mrs. Gardner chose the chrysanthemum design for display, simply because it is more colorful and less damaged. The lower part of the two doors on the right show a stream and some green patches of grass beside the water. The far left corner of the left door shows a part of a brushwood fence very faintly. The rest of the four doors is covered with gold leaf on which chrysanthemums with white flowers are painted. The petals are raised in thick white paint like the European *gesso* or *pastiglia*. The technique, often used in lacquer wares, has been widely applied to screen paintings since the Momoyama period.



On the other side of the four doors is a stand of young bamboos. The bamboo is very common in Japan. It is loved for its straightness and flexibility. It frequently appears in landscape painting and the stem is used in crafts of numerous kinds. The young bamboos sketched on the doors are made to look as wild as nature itself; yet the background of gold leaf transforms nature into a design worthy of a palace chamber. Narrow straight lines of stalks broken by the rings, or nodes, form a grid below the curves of slender leaves, all in green, silhouetted against the gold. The doors do not have a signature or seal, and it is not possible to determine the school the artist belonged to. They might have been done, like many screen and mural paintings, in a studio where many artists worked on the same project.

A fan-shaped cedar wood panel in the Second Floor Stair Hall, north, was probably taken from an end wall of a corridor in a house or a temple (figure 4). The panel has a seal which says "Hōgen Yasukuni" (1717-1792). Hōgen was one of the four ranks of Buddhist priests given by the Emperor to scholarly priests beginning in the eighth century. From the eleventh century until the fourteenth century it included Buddhist sculptors, and after that, until the abolition of the system in 1874, secular artists with due accomplishments could receive the title by simply joining their names in the order of priesthood. Yasukuni, a Kano artist from Osaka, was one of them.

The painting shows Hsi Wang-mu and her two attendants, legendary beings supposed to dwell upon the K'un Lun mountains on which grew the fairy peaches said to ripen but once in three thousand years and confer immortality upon those who ate them. In a magnificent palace with buildings of marble and jasper surrounded by beautiful gardens and sparkling brooks, lived this lovely Chinese princess, attended by two young girls, one of whom is shown with a large fan; the other with a basket of the miraculous peaches.

In the panel, the clouds above and below her have a geometric design. She stands with a fan in her hands, looking at the fairy peach tree. The Lake of Gems is seen near the tree and a part of her palace on the right. The weight of the painting is placed on Hsi Wang-mu who is painted as large as the peach tree and larger than her two attendants to emphasize her importance.

Mrs. Gardner bought this panel at the Yamanaka Sale in Boston in 1902. Some years later, Archibald Cary Coolidge (1866-1928), her nephew, gave her a small Chinese jade carving of Hsi Wang-mu holding a peach in her hand. Beside her is an attendant and near them a stag. The background is the mountain where she lived (figure 5). It is exhibited in a Chinese teakwood cabinet, Short Gallery, along with other





Figure 2. CHRYSANTHEMUMS.  
(*fusuma*); full color on gold. Each: 5



Figure 3. BAMBOOS. Anon





onymous; a set of four sliding doors  
 1 1/2 in. x 4 ft. 10 1/2 in. (1.82 x 1.49 m.).



onymous; the other side of Figure 2.





*Figure 4.* HSI WANG-MU. Yasukuni; painted wood panel. 2 ft. 4 in. x 3 ft. 10 in. (0.71 x 1.17 m.).



*Figure 6.* LUTE. Anonymous; six-fold in. x 11 ft. 10½ in. (1.665 x 3.62 m.).





*Figure 5.* HSI WANG-MU.  
Chinese carved jade ornament  
on a carved teakwood stand.  
H. 6¾ in. (0.195m.).



paper screen; full color on gold. 5 ft. 5½

objects from the Orient. It appears to be a late eighteenth-century work.

Chinese legendary figures as well as scenes drawn from episodes of the Chinese court became common in Japanese paintings in the second half of the sixteenth century when Eitoku (1543-1590), who was then head of the Kano school, introduced a new style with rich colors on a gold ground. Japanese artists have continued to favor classical Chinese subject matter to this day. Two Japanese screens in the Gardner Museum deal with Chinese scenes: *The Vinegar Tasters* (cf. *Fenway Court*, Vol. 2, No. 4) and *Lute* (figure 6) in the Third Floor Passage. The latter depicts a lute musician on the right, and a group of listeners and attendants on a mountain by a stream. The subject matter is usually called "The Four Enjoyments," a traditional Chinese and Confucian subject glorifying a scholar's *métier* of lute, chess, calligraphy and painting. It is possible that this was one of a pair of screens which dealt with both lute and chess. Although retouching is heavy, the composition as well as details (such as a golden net on the head of one of the three listeners in the center) attest to the quality of this screen from the second half of the seventeenth century.

YASUKO HORIOKA

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# FENWAY COURT

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## LOVE'S GREETING

**B**OSTONIANS WHO ATTENDED the first local exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the Athenaeum in 1858 viewed them as curiosities, very much like many modern critics for whom most Pre-Raphaelite painting has interest only as one eccentric expression of Victorian romanticism. But during the late nineteenth century the Pre-Raphaelites achieved critical respectability and popular favor, and in 1892 Mrs. Gardner purchased *Love's Greeting* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a founder of the movement.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, launched with youthful enthusiasm in 1848, almost succumbed to the attacks provoked by its first paintings in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1850. They were damned as notoriety seekers who threatened the very foundations of British society. Their work was described as wild, uncouth. Millais's *Christ in the House of His Parents* (Tate Gallery, London) shocked *Blackwood's Magazine* with its "... splay feet, puffed joints and misshapen limbs," while the *Times* deplored the blasphemy of an artist who dared place the Holy Family in a carpenter's shop painted with "loathsome reality."

This violent attack was a natural reaction on the part of the British artistic establishment. In choosing its name, the Brotherhood was flaunting its rejection of classicism, the inheritance of Graeco-Roman and Renaissance art which had long been enshrined in European academies as the supreme achievement of Western art. The Pre-Raphaelites believed that art since Raphael had stagnated under the conventions of classicism. They preferred "truth to nature" to the idealized scenes and subjects of the old masters and their facile but often empty imitators in mid-nineteenth century Britain. They would imitate no one, but they admitted a sympathy for the primitive directness they saw in medieval art. The academicians detected in these views not only arrogance but a lamentable taste for crude naturalism.

The tendency toward naturalism coexisted with an almost contradictory flight away from reality into fantasy, which was perhaps conditioned by the revolutionary unrest of Europe in 1848. In England the "Hungry Forties" had culminated in a huge Chartist demonstration and the possibility of a working class rebellion. Several of the Pre-Raphaelites sympathized with Chartism and even Rossetti, who disliked working class "cads", was concerned by the rampant poverty and social tensions that seemed to be a product of industrialism. Disturbed by their environment, the Pre-Raphaelites shared a romantic nostalgia for the past with other critics of modern England, including Tennyson, Carlyle, Ruskin, Disraeli and Dickens. Burne-Jones's description of his own paintings as beautiful dreams of things that never were and never would be, applies as well to Rossetti's work. The Pre-Raphaelites may have been, as William Gaunt describes them, Don Quixotes who tilted at factories, but their revolt generally expressed itself aesthetically rather than politically.

The movement began with William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, friends and fellow students at the Royal Academy. Distressed by the staleness they found there, they were excited when they discovered the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843), in which Ruskin urged artists to "go to nature in all singleness of heart, selecting nothing, rejecting nothing." In 1848 they became friends with the nineteen-year-old, Anglo-Italian poet and painter, Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti (1828-1882), who quickly transformed their friendship into the nucleus of a secret society of art. He introduced them to his brother, William Michael, and to three young art amateurs, and then proposed that the seven men form a monastic art union. Its members would not swear, drink or smoke. They would rescue fallen women and emulate selected immortals, including Homer, Christ, Joan of Arc, Columbus and Mrs. Browning. Their painting would express genuine ideas and emotions through an attentive study of nature and the avoidance of conventional painting. If their creed seemed abstract, it was because it was literary and moral rather than artistic. Unlike the Impressionists, they were more concerned with thematic than with plastic values, and with the exception of Millais, all of the Pre-Raphaelites shared, in varying degrees, a technical inadequacy which often frustrated their work.

It is significant that Rossetti, whose life was marred by alcohol, drugs and unhappy relations with his wife and several other women, including the wife of his friend William Morris, should have stressed the high moral purpose of the Brotherhood, while Hunt and Millais were always disturbed by his romantic transformation of their simple creed of "truth to nature". An uneasy union of diverse spirits, the Brotherhood





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Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Studies for the Rose Garden, ca. 1861, for the title page of *The Early Italian Poets*. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Figure 1*. Pencil, 7 x 5¼ inches (0.178 x 0.134 m.) *Figure 2*. Pen and brown ink, 6⅞ x 4¼ inches (0.175 x 0.108 m.) *Figure 3*. Pen and black ink, 6½ x 5¼ inches (0.165 x 0.134 m.)

was dead as a formal organization by the early 1850's, although it had a brief renewal at the end of the decade when Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris became disciples of Rossetti's. "Millais . . . became a pillar of the society from which the others recoiled . . . Morris's politics were anathema to Rossetti, Rossetti's medievalism repugnant to Hunt and Hunt's religious aims incomprehensible to Morris." (Gaunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Dream*, N. Y. 1966, p. 21.) Pre-Raphaelite influence lingered on in a wide circle of British literary and artistic figures, despite the disintegration of the original group.





Figure 4. Love's Greeting. Oil on wood panel. 22¼ x 24 inches (0.57 x 0.61 m.). 1861. Formerly in the William Graham collection and the F. R. Leyland collection. Purchased by Mrs. Gardner at sale of the latter in London, 1892 (No. 60).

Increasingly depressed by his technical limitations, Rossetti studied for brief periods with both Ford Madox Brown and Hunt, but he was dismayed when they insisted that he master the rudiments of technique. His imagination was essentially literary and in order to paint he needed themes of romantic or personal significance. The pickle jar which Hunt asked him to draw might offer interesting visual possibilities to other artists, but to Rossetti it represented impossible tedium. "The ordinary world of vision scarcely supplied any inspiration to him. It was only through the evocation in his own mind of a . . . world . . . of pure romance that . . . objects began to assume aesthetic meaning. Passionate desire was the central point of that world, (and) . . . it must rage in a curiosity shop, amid objects which had for him peculiarly exciting associations." (Roger Fry, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 29, June 1916, p. 100.)

The design for Love's Greeting was conceived amid such associations. It was originally worked out for the title page of his translations of medieval Italian poetry, published in 1861 as *The Early Italian Poets from Ciullo d'Alcamo to Dante Alighieri*. His father's reverence for Dante was reflected in Rossetti's lifelong sense of kinship with the Italian poet. It was more than a literary enthusiasm. Although not



published until he was thirty-three, his translations went back to student days, when the influence of these poems was crucial to his artistic and personal development. Dante was a source for his paintings, as well as the inspiration for his most intensely felt poems. Rossetti's life, especially his relations with his wife and with Jane Burden, wife of William Morris, suggest a desire to emulate the love of Dante for Beatrice. Y) Rossetti painted two furniture panels for the Morris home at Upton and Love's Greeting may also have been designed to decorate a piece of furniture at The Red House.

Rossetti was not pleased with the copper plate etching of his design for the title page of the translations, which appeared without illustration. But various sketches of the design of two lovers kissing in a rose garden still exist, including three in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (figures 1, 2, and 3). The idea that Love's Greeting (figure 4) was inspired by the French medieval poem, *The Romance of the Rose*, is suggested by its similarity to a painting now in the Tate Gallery, London, which bears the inscription "Roman de la Rose (figure 5). *The Romance of the Rose*, written during the thirteenth century, was perhaps the best loved and most widely known poem produced in medieval Europe. It was influential when the chivalric love poetry of Dante and his circle was being written, and Rossetti may have seen it as an appropriate symbol for his translations of their work.

The first section of the poem employs the popular medieval literary form, the allegory, to depict a young man's search for the love of his lady. Entering a rose garden ruled by the God of Love, he tries to pluck the most beautiful rose, a traditional symbol of the beloved. In Love's Greeting the lover kneels before his lady, who bends over him as they kiss. Above their heads are the inscriptions *amata* and *amator* (beloved and lover). To the left of the lady stands the figure of Amor, his wings sheltering the lovers. Both are dressed in what passes for medieval costume, while Amor plucks at Rossetti's version of a psaltery, a popular medieval instrument. Behind a wattle fence against a dark background appears a rose bush and on a scroll border at top and bottom is written in Italian: *My Lady, God made Thee, God keep Thee, My Lady God honor Thee; God exalt Thee, My Lady, God grant Thee Thy Wishes.*

In the Tate watercolor of 1864 (figure 5) the elements of the design have been re-arranged, with the figure of Amor standing at the right of the man, behind rather than in front of the fence, now holding a correctly drawn psaltery. A quiver of arrows is visible above the shoulder of Amor and one wing extends behind both heads. The roses, no longer





Figure 5.  
*Roman de la Rose*. Water colors,  
 13 ½ x 13 ½ inches  
 (0.343 x 0.343 m.).  
 Signed with Rossetti's monogram,  
 1864. Tate Gallery, London.



Figure 6.  
 The Salutation of Beatrice.  
 Oil on canvas, 60 ¾ x 36 inches  
 (1.543 x .914 m.).  
 Begun 1880. Toledo Museum of Art,  
 Toledo, Ohio.



Figure 7. *L'Amant*, from Chaucer's *Romance of the Rose*. Black crayon on paper,  
 35 ⅞ x 47 ⅞ inches (0.911 x 1.216 m.). 1881. Preliminary drawing for unexecuted  
 painting. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift in memory of Charles Eliot  
 Norton from his children.





Figure 8. Tile, one of a series of six entitled, "Beauty and the Beast," designed by Burne-Jones and hand painted by Lucy Faulkner as an overmantel for Birket Foster's home at Witley, Surrey. 1863. William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow.

in a single bush, appear in the openings of a lattice work fence. The dark background of Love's Greeting has been replaced by a decorative design.

Although these elements of Love's Greeting suggest a specific inspiration from the poem, the general theme of chivalric love appears throughout Rossetti's work. He uses many of the same images, although in a different design, in *The Salutation of Beatrice* (figure 6), in the Toledo Museum of Art. In the foreground Beatrice stands beside a rose bush, while Dante in the background is sheltered by the wings of Amor. The rose, whether on bushes, in bowls or in the hair of women, appears frequently in his work as a symbol of love, as it does in the work of other Pre-Raphaelites. For example, Burne-Jones's drawing *L'Amant*, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (figure 7) was inspired by Chaucer's *The Romance of the Rose*, and in the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow, there is a small tile painted from a design by Burne-Jones, in which a lover wearing roses on the sleeve of his blouse kneels before a lady in what appears to be a rose garden (figure 8).

Mrs. Gardner's purchase of this painting at a time when she was buying old masters almost exclusively seems curious. Perhaps the acquisition was suggested by Charles Eliot Norton, the Harvard professor of fine arts who influenced her formation of a collection of rare books, including a manuscript and editions of *The Divine Comedy*. John Ruskin had accompanied Norton to a Pre-Raphaelite exhibition in London in 1857 and then introduced him to Rossetti. Attracted by Rossetti's treatment of themes drawn from Dante, Norton commissioned two works from him and became an American defender of the movement.

Attendance at Norton's lectures led Mrs. Gardner to membership in the Dante Society in 1885. In the next seven years she acquired two volumes of Christina Rossetti's poetry, one of them with illustrations from designs by her brother, two volumes of Rossetti's own work, and a 1538 edition of *The Romance of the Rose*. Perhaps these factors created an interest in a painting that was otherwise outside the mainstream of her collection and led to the acquisition of Love's Greeting in 1892. It now hangs in the Yellow Room.

LINDA V. HEWITT

### WILLIAM NORRIS MASON, 1885-1969

The Annual Report to the Trustees by the Director of the Gardner Museum for the year 1944 records that William Norris Mason had become Assistant Director. He held that position until the end of 1963. A large part of his duty became the supervision of the museum's programs of music. Many years earlier those had been settled into a regular offering on every day that the museum was open to the public.

Mason was born in Bangor, Maine. In 1910 Harvard awarded him the degree, A.B., and in 1915 the degree, M.Arch. He worked in architecture from that date until he accepted the position at the museum. After he retired, he occasionally conducted groups of visitors through the collection as long as health permitted that activity. He died at Bangor, Maine, on 26 May 1969.

In his account of himself, published in the Fiftieth Anniversary Report of his class at Harvard, he concluded: "My life doubtless would have seemed very tame to many of our classmates, but it is the way I have chosen to spend it and it has been entirely satisfactory." Others could say that his life has been more than satisfactory to many.

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# FENWAY COURT

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## CHINESE SCULPTURE - I

A NUMBER OF OBJECTS were acquired for the collection just before World War I when the music room gave way to the galleries that visitors see today on the east side of the museum. Perhaps the two finest among the oriental objects came at this time, both through Mrs. Gardner's old friend, Bernhard Berenson, who had, like Mrs. Gardner, developed a taste for the art of China. About the stone stele in the Chinese Loggia (figure 1), he confessed: "I was not tempted *not* to do my best to persuade you to get it, but I retained a vague hope that you might refuse it and that then I could in conscience keep it for myself. What a marvel it is! ! ! ! !"

Since Edouard Chavannes, a French scholar, described it fully in "Six Monuments of Chinese Sculpture" (*Ars Asiatica* II, pp. 13-19, Paris, 1914), it has been referred to by many scholars of Chinese sculpture. The stone stele is made of two parts: the principal part is connected by a tenon into an inverted lotus flower which forms the upper part of the pedestal. On either side of the lotus were two recumbent lions (one is almost completely gone) and between them in front of the flower the evidence remaining suggests a bust of a man who may have supported an incense burner. On the front side of the monument are engraved five figures in high relief and the front face of the pedestal bears a long inscription flanked by low reliefs of two standing guardians. The dedication reads (figure 2):

"During the great *Wei* dynasty, the first year of *Wu Ting*; the rank of the year is *kuai hai*, the fifth month of which the first day is the day *kêng yin*, the fifteenth day which is the day of *chia ch'ên* [July 2nd, 543].

"The holy wisdom is extremely profound; without images, one does not have the means of seeing the truth in it. That is why seventy people,





*Figure 1.* CHINESE VOTIVE STELE, gray limestone. 4 ft. 8 in. x 2 ft. 8¼ in. (1.42 x .82 m.). Thickness at base 2 ft. ¾ in. (.63 m.) dated 543 A.D. Purchased in 1914 for Mrs. Gardner from the Goloubew Collection by Bernhard Berenson.



at the head of whom is a pure and believing man, Lo Tzu-kuan, disciple of Buddha, make with respect a stone image of Buddha to honor his Majesty the Emperor, and those of their ancestors of seven generations, and those of their parents still living.

“They desire that, through this, the innumerable beings of the universe would wholeheartedly return to impersonality; that this worthy action would extend to other beings as well as to themselves; that they abandon double personality caused by attachment to this world; that being and non-being in each of us may become one; that by profiting from the reality and employing the momentary presence, the thought of the ten regions may be transported to the beyond. Sister Sheng-chih (a nun).”

The last five Chinese characters could also mean “Sister Chih” or “written by a nun,” but it seems that as the last two characters are larger, a proper name was intended.

Buddhism, which was founded by Gautama (ca. 565-485 B.C.), did not have images at all until the first century of the Christian era when Greek civilization reached India through the conquest of Alexander the Great. It was about the same time that Buddhism reached China, but the art of the early Buddhists was destroyed by those who persecuted the faithful. The oldest specimens available to us are the gilt bronze and stone statues of Buddha of the fourth century and after. Early in the

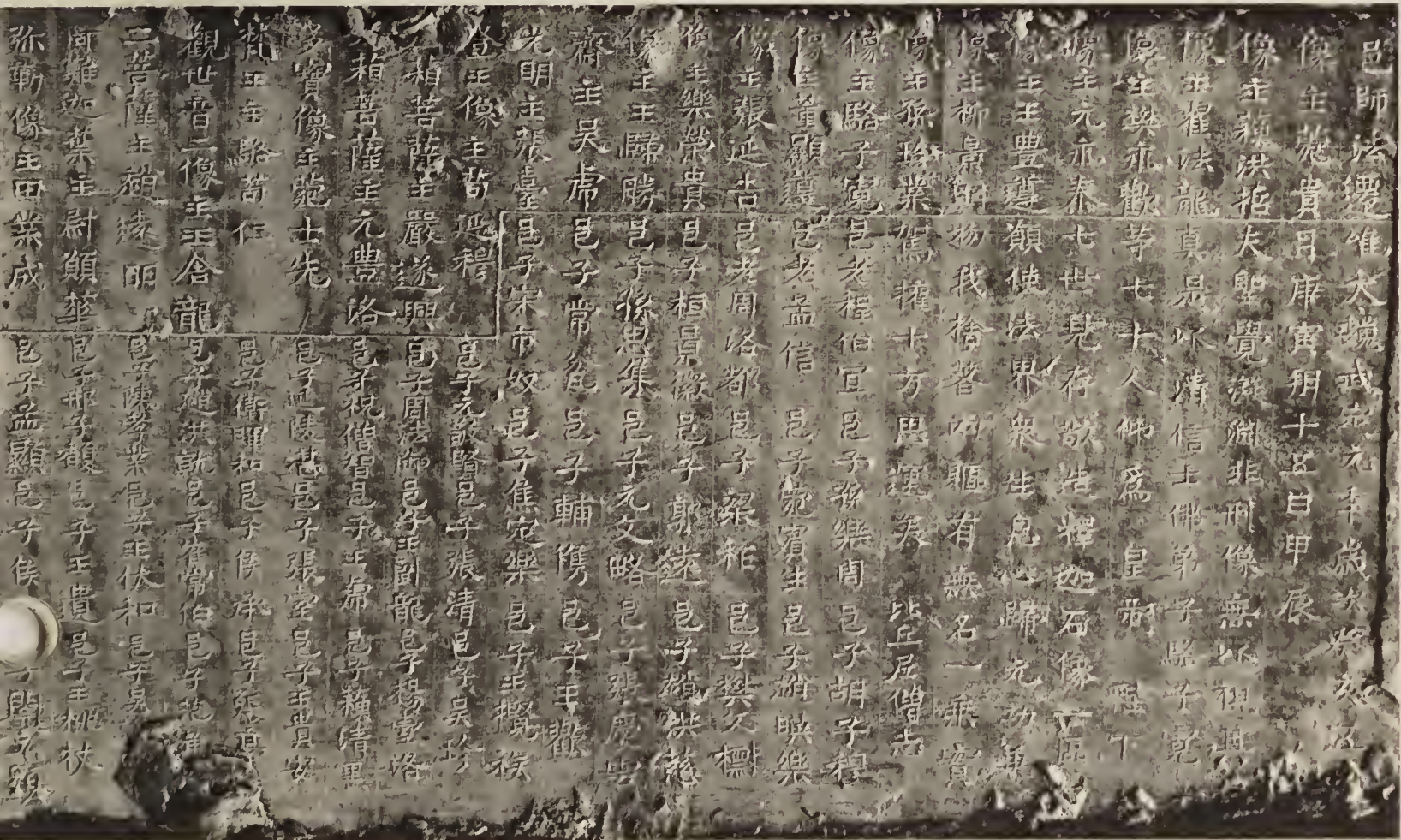


Figure 2. Detail of Figure 1, front of the pedestal.



third century after the division into northern and southern dynasties, China was in a constant state of unrest due to civil strife and foreign invasion. In northern China, Buddhism was encouraged by one emperor and then banned by another. When the ban was lifted again in 452, icons came into fashion. Not only emperors and nobles, but also the people commissioned Buddhist monuments by forming groups of donors, called “i”, which often numbered over four hundred members. According to the inscription, our stele was commissioned by seventy persons, but a list of seventy-eight donors follows the dedication. Above each of the twenty-seven names in the top row there is an indication of that part of the stele for which the donation was made. Although Chavannes is largely dependent on these specifications to identify the various images of the monument, particularly the missing ones, there is no way to prove that the sculptor faithfully followed the inscription or that the latter correctly described the engraved images.

In Buddhist art, personified images of various concepts of truth have been divided into four major groups. Sākyamuni belongs to the highest of the four, which is followed by the Bodhisattva group. In our stele, this hierarchy is distinguished by size. The two disciples with shaven heads, clad in monastic robes, are about half the size of Sākyamuni, because they are mortal, not the incarnated images of truth. Sākyamuni’s right hand (partly broken) has the gesture of fearlessness, and his left, the gesture of charity. This position of the hands along with the scene on the back of the stele identify the central figure as Sākyamuni. The protuberance on the head, wavy hair, elongated ears and a monk’s robe are the characteristics of the first of the four groups of Buddhist images. The Bodhisattva is usually identified by a crown, a necklace and a long stole around his neck which is fixed by a large ring at the front. In our stele, the one to the right of Sākyamuni carries a flask in his right hand, and the other (his head broken) has a leaf-shaped palette in his left hand. All five figures stand on five lotus flowers whose stems emerge from the two dragons on either side, which symbolize water. Although the upper part of the stele is missing, it probably had a leaf-shaped top. Chavannes suggests that there was an image of Bodhisattva Maitreya on the missing part.

The back of our stele is engraved in low relief (figure 3). The upper part illustrates a scene written in the eleventh chapter of the Lotus Sutra, one of the fundamental texts of Mahayana Buddhism. When Sākyamuni was preaching to the assembly, a meteoric phenomenon suddenly appeared in the sky, sparkling and beautiful. This *stûpa* contained the relics of Prabhūtaratna who had vowed to appear wherever the Lotus of the





Figure 3. Detail of Figure 1, upper part, rear view.

True Law was preached. Śākyamuni then rose into the air, and opened the door using the index finger of his right hand as a key, and Prabhūtaratna was heard saying: "Excellent, excellent, Lord Śākyamuni! thou hast well expounded the spirit of the Lotus Sutra." The two then sat side by side and engaged in conversation. The Chinese people were impressed by this story, and recorded the incident using stone and metal as well as paint. On our stele, we have Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated on a dais, and six monks below them, sitting on the ground. They are divided in two equal groups, facing each other. Seven stylistic lotus



flowers separate them. On either side of this group stand two Bodhisattvas. The one on the right carries a jewel in his left hand and a flaming jewel in his right. He wears a crown, a necklace, a stole, and a loincloth. The hands of the other Bodhisattva (his head partly broken) show the gestures of fearlessness and charity, like Śākyamuni on the front of the stele. The lower part shows an incense burner with a stylized lotus motif which is flanked by two sitting lions with bristling manes. Chavannes suggests an image of Brahma in the missing part at the top, as his name appears right next to that of Prabhūtaratna.

On each side of the stele is a standing figure which is, according to the inscription, supposed to be Bodhisattva Kuan-yin.

The ten figures which adorn the three sides of the pedestal are known as 'Spirit Kings' (figure 4). They are separated by oblong pendants on which their names are engraved. This is the only known monument where their names are inscribed. On one side of the pedestal, we have the Dragon Spirit King with a dragon head. He holds a lotus in his right hand, and probably a jewel in his left. The Wind Spirit King holds a bag full of winds. His hair is blown by a violent blast. The Pearl Spirit King is seen spewing pearls out of his mouth into a dish. The reverse side of the pedestal has four Spirit Kings. The first character of the name of the Spirit King on the right side is broken, but the flaming torch in his right hand identifies him as the Fire Spirit King. The Tree Spirit King holds a tree while the Mountain Spirit King sits in front of the rocks. The latter has a flaming jewel in his right hand. Although the first character of the name is broken, the next is identified as the Fish Spirit King from the large fish he carries. The Elephant Spirit King has an elephant head, and he holds a lotus. The Bird Spirit King has a beak of a bird and he carries a lotus. The last one is the Lion Spirit King whose face is seen in the wide-open mouth of a lion-headed helmet. The Spirit Kings are clad in



Figure 4. Detail of Figure 1, sides and rear of the pedestal.



different costumes according to the period and the locality to which they belong. Each of these Spirit Kings wears a collar caught at the shoulders by two discs, and a loincloth, leaving the belly and the chest bare. They sit with crossed ankles, with the exception of the Mountain Spirit King. The Spirit Kings are generally considered as minor nature gods without any basis in fact or scripture, but no information is available concerning their origin. They must be one of the lowest groups in the Buddhist hierarchy, as they are always found at the bases of monuments or cave walls.

On either side of the inscription stands a guardian king, who falls under the third category of the Buddhist images. The one on the right carries a flask in his left hand, and the one on the left carries a *vajra* or thunderbolt whose ends are in the shape of the blade of a lance. The latter bears the inscription on the right side which reads: "Tung Chin-kuang, donor of *Vajrapāni*, has presented the offering," while the other bears the words which means "donor of *Vajrapāni*." It is most likely that this person donated both guardians as they are usually found as a pair, possibly for symmetry's sake.

The Gardner stele, dated 543 A.D., is from the middle of the Eastern Wei Dynasty (534-550 A.D.), but the style is unusually advanced in comparison with other sculptures of the same period. While most retain the archaic mannerisms of the Northern Wei (386-534 A.D.), generally characterized by tight angularity and drapery which flares out at the hem, the images of the Gardner stele have bland faces, and the drapery has no flaring hems. Stylistic rigidity seen in the Northern Wei images is replaced by human warmth. Simplified drapery and roundness of body is a forecast of the heaviness of the Northern Chi sculptures (550-577 A.D.).



In the history of art, a style of a period always overlaps that of the following period. It was particularly so with Eastern Wei sculpture because the change of style was swift and varied according to the region. It seems likely that these individual stelae reflect the period more keenly than the sculptures in the cave temples where there existed more limitations on space and design. The low reliefs on the back and sides of the stele as well as those on the pedestal exhibit a linear beauty quite different from the figures of the front. J. L. Davidson described the two seated figures at the top: "Here for the first time in Chinese Buddhist sculpture the drapery is rendered in a purely naturalistic manner. Soft folds conform to the contours of the figures; there is an impression of flesh under cloth rather than a single symbol for body and textile." (*The Lotus Sutra in Chinese Art*, New Haven, 1954, p. 56.) Davidson explains that this dichotomy in style is either due to the presence of two hands, or the presentation of two styles: that of Central Asia, originally the amalgamation of the Gandhāra and Mathūra styles of India, and the calligraphic lines of the Chinese brush. At any rate, the Gardner stele ranks high in Chinese Buddhist sculpture of the sixth century as a fully inscribed individual work, well advanced in style.

YASUKO HORIOKA

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# FENWAY COURT

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## A TRIPTYCH BY FRANCESC COMES

THE LAST DECADES of the fourteenth century and the first quarter of the fifteenth saw the flowering of the "International Gothic" style throughout Europe. Decorative, elegant and aristocratic in character, this style was widely popular in the Iberian Peninsula, extending even to Spain's Balearic Islands.

A small but exquisite representative of Spanish International Gothic painting is to be found in a triptych in the Gardner Museum (figure 1).

The central panel of the altarpiece (figure 2) depicts the Virgin seated on a throne, dressed in brocade and a gold-embroidered cloak, with a crown upon her head. On her lap is the nude Christ Child, who plays with a lily in his mother's hand. Two angels offer them bouquets of flowers. At the feet of the Virgin kneels a young man, the donor, his black coat embroidered with gold, his black cap resting at the base of the throne. The ground behind the figures is gold, the haloes of the Virgin, Child, and angels are a simple, stamped design which also embellishes the panel border.

This same bordered, gold ground provides the sky for the narrative scenes on the two lateral panels. To the right, two episodes from the life of S. George are depicted. In the foreground, upon a white horse, the saint slays a diminutive, bat-winged dragon, while a small princess in courtly dress looks on. Behind her (but in the same scale as the maiden), S. George receives instruction from God, who carries a book, while an angel, emerging from a star-filled cloud, guides him. To the left, a castle looms behind some very small trees.

In the foreground of the right hand panel, S. Martin, dressed in gold

brocade, has just cut his cloak in half. The recipient, a rudely-dressed beggar, fingers his portion in obvious gratitude. In this same wing, S. Anthony, staff in hand, is being assaulted by three demons, who beat him and bear him away from his hut. At the same time, a divine hand, emerging once again from a starry cloud, blesses the tormented hermit. As in the left panel, the landscape is peppered with small trees and strewn with flowers.

The concentration on sumptuous costume, miniscule detail, and a still fairly arbitrary scale at the expense of logical space (to the point of reducing trees to dwarfed proportions so as not to block figures), are all hallmarks of the International Gothic style. These characteristics are to be found alike in the painting of France, Italy, Bohemia and Germany during the years around 1400. Spain, always more comfortable artistically with formal design rather than classical logic, retained the International Gothic style much later than did the rest of Europe, in many cases, well into the 1440's.

This triptych, however, is a relatively early example. Felicitously, the altarpiece can be matched with an identifiable personality, a painter named Francesc Comes who spent most of his career on the island of Mallorca. Long isolated as an artistic entity under the name of the "Inca Master," the artist was identified when one of the key works attributed to him, a *Salvator Mundi* in the Church of S. Eulalia, Palma de Mallorca (figure 3), was cleaned. The cleaning revealed an inscription reading "Francesch Comes me pinxit."

This find linked the painting to an already published set of documents referring to the activity of Francesc Comes on Mallorca from 1388 to 1395. In the latter year, he was recorded as painting an altarpiece (now lost) of S. Anthony for the parish church of Valldemosa.

The attribution to Comes of the Gardner altarpiece is virtually certain if one compares the left wing with one of Comes' key works, a single panel of S. George Killing the Dragon (figure 4), originally in the convent of San Francisco, Inca, and now in the Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana of Palma de Mallorca.

The Inca panel not only presents the same theme, but a very similar composition. S. George is astride a white horse and carries the shield with the red cross. Though the dragon is somewhat bigger and more menacing than in the triptych, and the relative positions of princess and castle are now reversed, both style and approach are close to the Gardner panel.





*Figure 1.* The Madonna and Child with S. George and S. Martin. Tempera on wood panels, 30 x 40 (.76 x 1.01 m.). Bought by Mrs. Gardner from Durand-Ruel, New York, 1901. Formerly in the Gavet collection, Paris.

The greater elaboration of the Inca S. George may be due to the fact that it was apparently the principal, rather than a mere subsidiary panel of an altarpiece. Here we find the same bonzai-like trees and strewn flowers, as well as a landscape vertically arranged.

Even more telling are the facial types of the protagonists. In both panels, the figures have prominent eyes, round-set yet half closed, straight noses and small round mouths, with a single black line dividing the lips. The hands of the figures are, in both cases, small and spidery.

The strong similarity between the two panels speaks of the existence of a prosperous workshop, in which basic compositions could be used over and over again. This was common practice in Spain at this period, particularly in the important ateliers of the Kingdom of Aragon, which included Mallorca.

There is reason to believe that Comes had his origins not in the Balearic Islands, but rather in Valencia. There is a Valencian document which bears the date of August 13, 1380, predating by eight years the artist's first mention on Mallorca. In it, a young Catalan named Guillelmi Rubiols is placed with "Ffrancesch Comes, vicino [resident of] Valencie" for a year's apprenticeship. This would imply that Comes was, by 1380, an established artist in Valencia. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that subsequent Mallorcan documents referring to Comes speak of commissions for paintings which were to be shipped to Valencia.





Figure 2. The Madonna and Child, central panel of the triptych. Detail of figure 1.





Figure 3. Salvator Mundi. Palma de Mallorca, Iglesia de S. Eulalia.



*Figure 4. S. George. Palma de Mallorca, Sociedad Arqueologica Luliana. Formerly in the convent of San Francisco, Inca.*

A further support for his presence in Valencia comes from a panel from the Retable of S. Vincent and S. Lawrence in the Valencian town of Liria (Iglesia de la Sangre). This altarpiece was apparently executed by several hands, but the small panel at the central pinnacle of the retable, showing the Virgin and Child in a Rose Garden (figure 5), bears a close similarity in style both to the Inca and Gardner panels. Here once again we see heavy lids on round eyes, straight noses, rosebud lips, and small, spidery hands. Once again, the flower-garden setting is carpet-like, strewn with flowers and diminutive foliage, and the material in the garments falls in calligraphic curves. Although most critics date the Liria retable c. 1390, it should be possible to push the date back three or four years to accommodate the presence of Comes in Valencia before his move to Mallorca.

If the identity of the artist of the Gardner triptych is no longer in question, there is still controversy over the identification of the donor. The young man who kneels at the Virgin's feet in the central panel, his black velvet doublet embroidered with gold, is obviously an aristocrat.

Over thirty years ago, the scholar A. van de Put published an iconographical analysis of the various symbols embroidered on the young man's garment. (A. Van de Put, "A Primitive at Boston and the Double



Crown of Aragon," *Art in America*, February 1932, pp. 51-59.) The most significant of these occurs midway down the sleeve. This is a double crown, which Van de Put identifies as the *corona doble* of Aragon, a device created by the Aragonese king, Juan I, in 1392, and which he bestowed on relatives and courtiers. His successor, Martin I (1395-1410) also granted it to privileged subjects, but with the change in the Aragonese dynasty after 1412, it was rarely given thereafter.

Reading the series of letters which appear on the donor's doublet, Van de Put spelled out *net de re d'Aragó*, in Catalan which means the grandson of the King of Aragon. Since Juan died without a male heir, the reference would probably be to a grandson of Martin I. The only candidate in this instance could be the bastard son of Martin's son (also named Martin, who died before his father). This bastard grandson was named Fadrich (1402-38). Fadrich, Sicilian by birth and resident there, was in Spain in 1412, but the portrait seems to be of a person more than ten years old.

Recently, the Catalan literary critic and historian, Martí de Riquer, has proposed that the donor should be identified with Juan I himself. (Martí de Riquer, *Bernat Metge, obras completas*, Barcelona, 1959, pp.



Figure 5. Virgin in Rose Garden, central pinnacle of retable of S. Vincent and S. Lawrence. Liria, Iglesia de la Sangre.

166-7.) He cites a description of Juan by his secretary, the writer Bernat Metge: "a man of middle stature, with a reverent face, dressed in red velvet, strewn with golden double crowns, with a red velvet cap on his head."

Although the donor here is dressed in black, not red, the description fits otherwise. And Juan I's well-known propensity toward sumptuous dress and his having instituted the *corona doble* are strong arguments for identifying this portrait as that of the elder monarch. In addition, it might be pointed out that the style of the painting accords better with a date during Juan I's reign (1387-95), although Comes was still active in 1412. Riquer suggests that the portrait might have been painted during the last year of Juan's life, when he spent time on Mallorca in order to escape the plague.

Another document referring to Comes bears citing in this context. In the year 1395, he was paid for two portraits, one depicting Richard II of England, the other of a person described as the "Duke of England." These "portraits" were actually based on descriptions by a Frenchman named Lustrach, who was connected with the Aragonese court as an alchemist. The two portraits were to be presented to Juan I.

If this instance of an association with Juan does not necessarily imply that he was the donor of the Gardner triptych, the identification of the donor as a member of the royal house of Aragon is virtually certain, and so Francesc Comes has the admirable distinction of being associated with the Aragonese royal dynasty at least twice.

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# FENWAY COURT

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## CHINESE SCULPTURE - II

**D**URING THE SEVERAL MILLENNIA of Chinese history many dynasties rose and fell, but none was as powerful as the Former and Later Han dynasties, which extended from the second century B.C. to the early third century A.D. with a short interval of the Hsin dynasty between them. It was a prosperous period, rivaled only by the T'ang dynasty, which lasted from the seventh to the tenth century. After nearly two hundred years of war and social turmoil the Han period was marked by a desire to revive ancient culture and, at the same time, to create a new civilization. The spirit of the Han people is well reflected in their art, particularly in animal sculptures in the round, of stone or of bronze. The Gardner collection has three fine specimens of Han animal figures and one pre-Han piece, which are dealt with here.

Two gilt bronze bears in the glass case in the Room of Early Italian Paintings were acquired in 1914 from Marcel Bing at Paris through Bernhard Berenson. According to the information given by Mr. Bing they were discovered in 1900 near Hsi-an Fu, an ancient capital in the province of Shensi. They were owned by Mr. Ting, a Chinese collector in the Shantung province, until September 1913. The bears (Figures 1a, 1b, 1c) are not a pair, but two separate figures intended to be alike. Each bear sits on its haunches with his left hind leg out to the right side, and his right hind leg bent behind his right foreleg. The head thrusts out from between the shoulders, and a very short tail points to his left side. While such details as small round ears, a short snout, the ruff of hair about the neck and low-relief eyes are given, the paws as well as his half-open toothless mouth are treated in a rough manner. One bear has inscriptions on his right feet (a Chinese character meaning "king" on the forefoot and another meaning "right" on the hind foot). The other bear



*Figure 1a.* Gilt Bronze Bear, Han Dynasty. H.  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in. (.155 m.).  
Gardner Museum. Inv. No. S15w15.



*Figure 1b.* Gilt Bronze Bear, Han Dynasty. H.  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in. (.155 m.).  
Gardner Museum. Inv. No. S15w16.





*Figure 1c.* Side View of Figure 1b.



*Figure 1d.* Gilt Bronze Bear, Han Dynasty. H. 5  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (.131 m.).  
City Art Museum, St. Louis. Accs. No. 35.33.



shows traces of the same thing. They were incised later and do not give a clue to the date. Traces of green pigment and lacquer still remain on their bodies, evidence that they were at one time painted.

The art of metal-casting generally declined in the Han period, probably because of decreased demand for ritual vessels, and the bears reflect the fact by the uneven finish of the molten bronze. Bears similar to these are found in the collections of the City Art Museum, St. Louis (Figure 1d) and of Mr. A. Stoclet in Brussels. The former is slightly smaller with a change in the position of its left hind leg. The latter has a lower outline for the ruff of hair about the neck. Although these animals are usually considered Han products, the dates given by scholars range from the second half of the third century B.C. to the third century A.D.

There are different types of bear figures which belong to the same period. Some squatting bears used as caryatids were hollow with large apertures at the top and bottom through which were passed the legs of a piece of furniture. Some small bear figures of jade were perforated to be worn around the neck or to hang at the waist as amulets or charms. It is difficult to say for what purpose the Gardner bears were intended. Prof. Max Loehr of Harvard University points to the *Book of Songs*, one of the old literary works of China, where it states that the bear was regarded as a symbol of male offspring. He further comments that like other nations of northeast Asia ancient China may have practiced propitiation rites after bear hunts. (*Relics of Ancient China*, New York, 1959, p. 26). The popularity of the bear in Han art may indicate that they were cult objects or symbols of creative power. Many sculptural pieces were found in Han tombs, suggesting funerary purposes or, at any rate, that they were made for some purpose other than for art's sake despite their esthetic beauty.

A green jade bear in the Fogg Art Museum (Figure 2), though small, shows a typical style of Shang sculpture in animal form. With the exception of ears which stick out, the shape of a bear is formed from a square block with grooves carved in it. The treatment of the eye, as shown in this photograph, is typical of Shang workmanship: a pointed oval rim with the beak-shaped tear duct, and a pupil which extends beyond the rim. The eyes are extraordinarily large in proportion to the dainty little figure of the bear. Eyes such as these are found in the stylized *t'ao-t'ieh* masks which appear on almost all the ritual vessels of ancient China. The mask is identified with a mythological monster of greed called "*t'ao-t'ieh*," a symbol of warning against wantonness. The eyes of the jade bear indicate that even small animal figures could not escape from the magical spell of *t'ao-t'ieh* during the Shang and Chou dynasties.

Toward the end of the latter the style of the ritual vessels underwent



change. Roundness was added to their shape, and the *t'ao-t'ieh* masks were modified by stylized designs of animals, clouds or waves. Sculptors carved animals as they appeared. A serpentine pig (Figure 3) in the Dutch Room, a Christmas gift of Denman Waldo Ross to Mrs. Gardner in 1922, is a good example of the style. Its rounded contours are disturbed only by the legs held under its voluminous body, by a short tail and by the small ears which are partly cut into the body. Its wrinkled

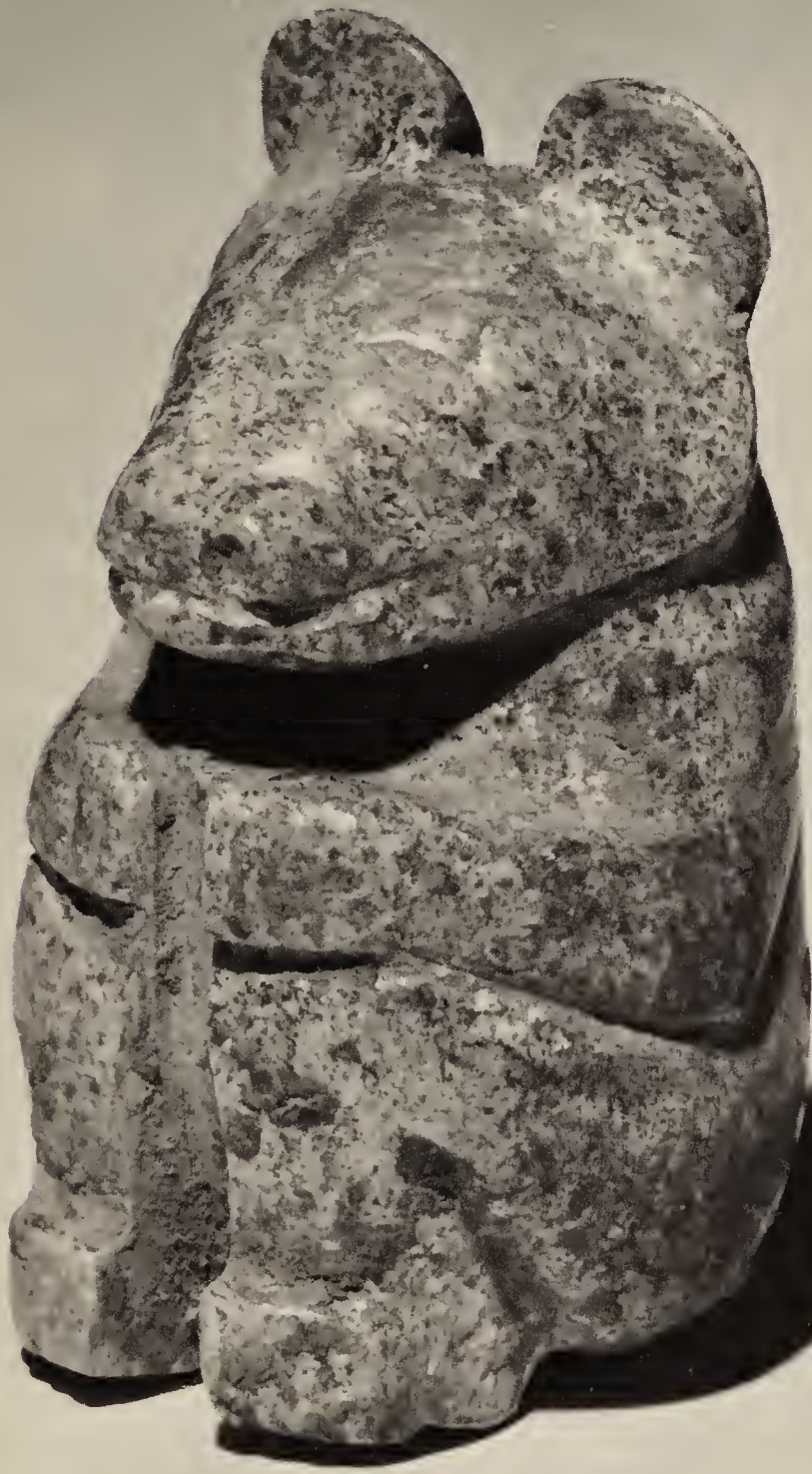


Figure 2. Jade Bear, Shang Dynasty. H.  $1\frac{3}{8}$  in. (.035 m.) W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (.013 m.).  
Courtesy, Fogg Art Museum. Accs. No. 1943.50.307. Harvard University. Grenville L. Winthrop Bequest.



*Figure 3.* Serpentine Pig, Pre-Han period. L.  $4\frac{5}{8}$  in. (.12 m.).  
Gardner Museum. Inv. No. S21w22.



*Figure 4.* Jade Pig, Han Dynasty. L.  $4\frac{5}{8}$  in. (.117 m.), W. 1 in. (.254 m.).  
Courtesy, Fogg Art Museum. Accs. No. 1943.50.258. Harvard University. Grenville  
L. Winthrop Bequest.





*Figure 5.* Pottery Dog with Green Glaze, Han Dynasty. H. 5  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (.136 m.).  
Gardner Museum, Inv. No. C21w23.



*Figure 6.* Pottery Mastiff, Han Dynasty. H. 11 in. (.279 m.).  
Courtesy, Cernuschi Museum, Paris. No. 6039.

snout and nostrils as well as the eyes and neckline are incised. His eyes no longer carry the Shang motif of the *t'ao-t'ieh* but are more lifelike.

The naturalistic attempt in the Han period, however, was hampered by a yearning for a revival of the ancient sculpture. The artists tried to add the abstract quality of the ancient art to their naturalistic rendering, and in so doing they failed to achieve either of them. The comparison of the Gardner pig with the Han pig of the Fogg Museum (Figure 4) clearly shows the difference between the pre-Han and Han styles. The wrinkled snout, eyes, ears and upper limbs of the Han pig are outlined by incised lines on the tubular body and the back is uncarved except for the tail, whereas roundness prevails in the pre-Han pig. The same rough treatment of the legs is shown in a Han pottery dog, purchased from Parish-Watson & Company in New York in 1922 on recommendation of Dr. Ross. Unlike other Han dog figures which are usually in a standing position, and often harnessed, the Gardner dog is seated, front legs spread. In spite of the natural rendering of the hind legs, the clay left between the front and hind legs gives an unfinished impression. Both ears and the tail were formed out of the body, but the clay figure was completely without final remodeling. Figure 5 shows the Gardner dog, and figure 6 represents a similar object in the Cennuschi Museum, Paris.

In their attempt to recreate the abstract quality of the ancient art in the context of naturalism, the Han sculptors failed to retain the Shang elegance. As a result, roughness dominates their skilful representation of an animal. Han sculpture, however, occupies an important place in the history of Chinese art as the last sample of realism before Buddhism with its numerous images swept over China in the centuries following the Han period.

YASUKO HORIOKA

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# FENWAY COURT

PUBLISHED BY THE ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM

## A CATALAN S. MICHAEL

**S.** MICHAEL was a popular figure in medieval painting. He was frequently shown vanquishing the Devil as a golden youthful knight, and, as a relentless champion of impartial justice, he figured in representations of the Last Judgment as the weigher of souls. In fifteenth century Spain, these two functions of S. Michael were frequently combined in one painted representation. The Gardner Museum has a beautiful example of this in a panel from the region of Catalonia.

The Archangel, spear in his left hand, scale in his right, is seated upon a throne. The spear menaces the defeated Devil, who lies upon the tiled floor. The Devil boasts not only one glassy-eyed, fanged face, but a second one in the region of his belly. Vanquished, but still defiant, he clutches one side of Michael's scale in his clawed hand. The scale contains a shrouded, damned soul, who covers his eyes in grief at the fate which awaits him. The other side of the scale contains a second, similarly garbed soul, being saved by a white-robed angel (fig. 1).

In composition, the whole panel is roughly symmetrical, Devil balancing angel. S. Michael himself occupies the center with wings outstretched, knees bent, the diagonal of his spear echoed in the bar of the scale and the sword he wears. This symmetry would have been a little less evident in the panel's original state, however. A strip of the panel to the right, now disturbingly blank and incomplete, was originally covered by an elaborate gilt frame, as was the corresponding left-hand side.

Despite the ferocity of the demon, there is little emotion. S. Michael's face remains quite impassive, his position curiously static. At the same time, the space within the painting is quite flat, and although the tiles of the floor recede somewhat into depth, the foreshortening of the throne is so unconvincing that the Archangel seems to squat, rather than sit.

The impact of the painting is achieved not through space or by means of the drama of the story it tells, but through form and color. S. Michael himself is a symphony in red and black. His armor and cloak lining are black, while his gold-studded surcoat is scarlet, as are his sleeves and shoes. His cloak is crimson. To set this off, the brocade panel behind the throne is a vivid blue. Behind this in turn is a ground of gold leaf applied over a gesso foundation, which is actually modelled with a raised thistle pattern, and which, by its physical three-dimensionality, flattens the forms ostensibly in front of it. Similarly, the haloes of S. Michael and the angel, his crown and sword hilt, and the studs in his armor are raised and gilded. Thus, we are confronted with a partial illusion of three dimensionality in design flattened by the physical modelling of the raised picture surface. In addition, the surface seems to pulsate with the contrasts of black, red and blue and light-reflecting gold leaf. The total effect is that of something rather hieratic and flat, but extremely rich and vibrant, like an enormous piece of cloisonné enamel work.

What is perhaps more remarkable about this large (1.84 x 1.44 m.) panel is that it was but one compartment of a bigger altarpiece — and not the main panel at that. Spanish altarpieces, or *retables*, were large-scale elaborate affairs, consisting of numerous components. The largest central panel was generally that of the saint to whom the altar was dedicated. This was flanked by narratives from the life of that saint, and perhaps effigies of other subsidiary saints as well.

The Museum of Catalan Art in Barcelona possesses several paintings which evidently come from the same altar as the S. Michael. These include a S. Jerome, and scenes from the life of S. John the Baptist: the Naming of S. John by Zacharias, The Baptism of Christ, the Decapitation of S. John, and The Presentation of John's Head to Herod by Salomé.

Not only are these panels of approximately the same dimensions as the S. Michael, but all were to be found, along with the Gardner painting, at the turn of the century in the parish church of the town of Benavente, in the Aragonese province of Huesca. Their ultimate provenance, however, was the now-destroyed church of S. Juan del Mercado, in Lérida. This would explain the predominance of the theme of the life of S. John. Since all of these panels are large, but of uniform size, one must conclude that they constituted the lateral portions of what must have been the high altar of colossal size — a *retable* dedicated to the titular saint of the church of S. Juan del Mercado. The central effigy of the altarpiece has evidently been lost.



The single figure of S. Michael suggests that it probably flanked the central image of the Baptist, and the S. Jerome in Barcelona probably occupied a corresponding position on the other side. Indeed, if we examine the S. Jerome (fig. 2), the composition itself would seem to bear this out. The Church Father is seated before a lectern, and fondles an heraldic lion. Behind him, hanging from what appears to be a cloister, is a blue brocade cloth, while beyond that is a low garden, bounded by a thistle-strewn gold ground. S. Jerome is dressed in scarlet which is echoed in the vaults of the cloister, and this is set off by the blue of the brocade much in the same way as S. Michael.

The narrative panels of the altarpiece are somewhat less successful. In the Presentation of John's Head to Herod by Salomé, for example (fig. 3), the lack of space and the lack of drama are all too evident. A slightly up-ended table divides the room horizontally in half. To the left behind the table are a group of courtiers and musicians, while Herod and Herodias are placed in the same plane to the right. Behind the latter is a scarlet brocade hanging, while to the left is a shelf with dishes, and a window looking out on to a seascape. In front of the table are some women courtiers at left, and a lone man at the extreme right, while Salomé, brandishing S. John's head upon a plate, stands at center. The emotions of the participants range from distracted (the courtiers) to mildly smug (Salomé). Herod and Herodias react as if they were being presented with a slightly rancid roast rather than a bloody head.

The real drama and vibrancy, once again, is in the color. The vivid red of the hanging is reflected in the surcoat of Herod, in the dress of one of the court ladies, and in the musician directly above her. The young man to the left of the musician is dressed in blue, as is the lady at the extreme left and the courtier in the right foreground. Salomé wears a gown of black and gold brocade. Gold re-echoes in the raised details of haloes, crowns and ornaments, and acts like punctuation marks in flowery prose. Pattern and color juxtapositions dominate the composition. Even in a dramatic scene, formal surface elements prevail.

What is fortunate is that we can connect this altarpiece with an artist through another signed painting. This is a Virgin and Child with Angels, originally from the parish church of Bellcaire (Lérida), and now in the Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona (fig. 4).

Seated upon a throne, crowned with a golden halo and enclosed below by a gilded crescent moon, the Virgin holds the nude Christ Child upon her lap. Flanking her are four angels. The two standing are playing lutes. Of the other, one offers grapes to the Virgin, the



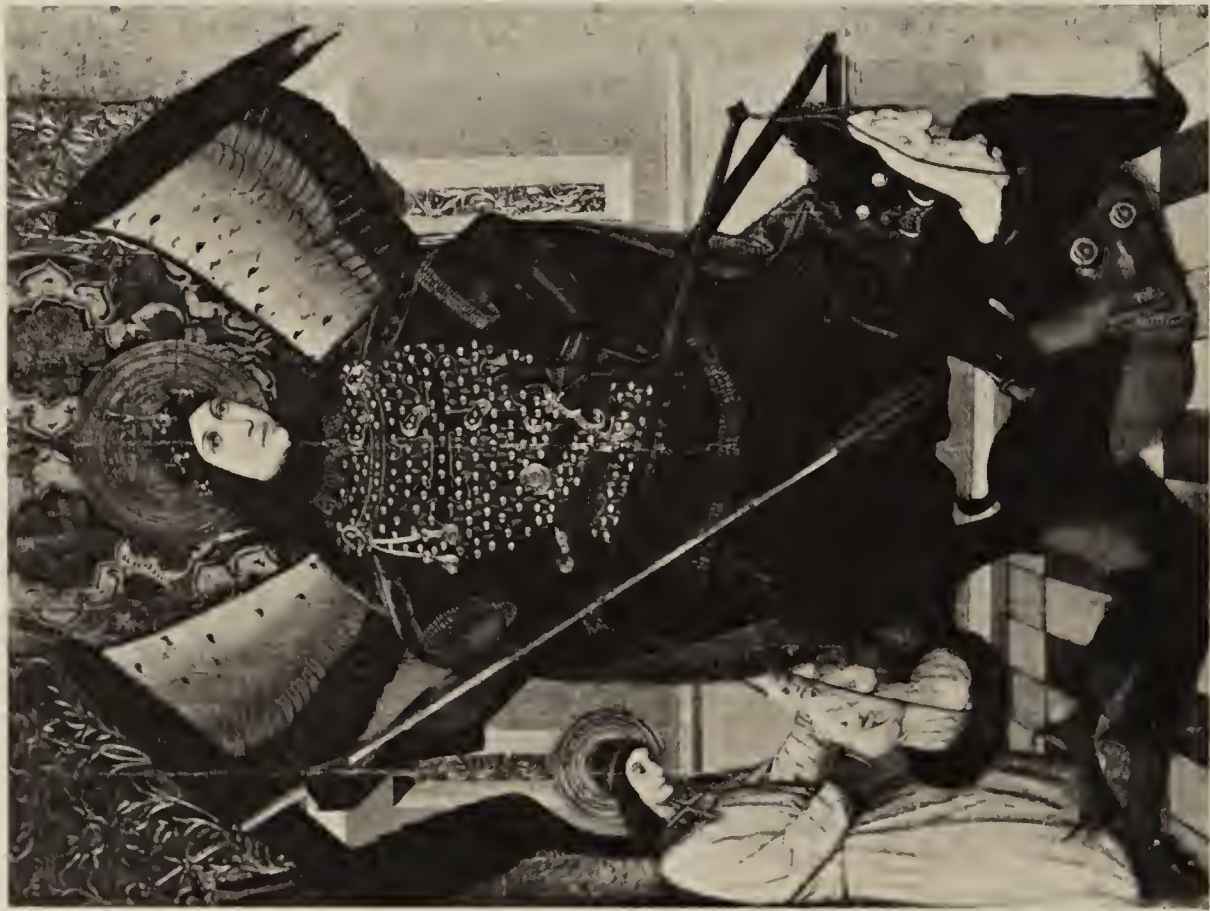


Figure 1. S. Michael, probably lateral panel from retablo dedicated to S. John the Baptist. Tempera (?) on panel,  $72\frac{1}{4} \times 56\frac{1}{2}$  (1.84 x 1.44), with crack through center and patch of restoration over devil's left leg and right ankle. Bought by Mrs. Gardner in 1916 from Paul J. Sachs, who had purchased it from Demotte, Paris, in April of that year.



Figure 2. S. Jerome (detail). Museo de Bellas Artes, Barcelona.



other offers figs to Christ. The floor is elaborately tiled, and the gold ground is strewn with a thistle pattern like the one in the S. Michael. The musicians are dressed in green and white brocade, with green and white wings, while the other angels are garbed in gold to the left, and red brocade with a green sash to the right. The Virgin's robe is the traditional blue edged with raised gold decoration. The brocade behind the Virgin, now very rubbed, is red. In formal elements, in the use of gold and brocade, in the vivid color combinations and in physical type (which the reader can examine for himself), this panel is like the S. Michael and the other paintings from S. Juan del Mercado.

If the faces of the Belcaire personages seem softer than the Lérida panels, it may be pointed out that this work was barbarously repainted in the nineteenth century, when a dealer attempted to disguise it as Sienese. The subsequent cleaning left the panel with a rubbed surface.

Below the throne is an inscription: "Pere Garcia de Benabarre m'a pintat any---" ("Pere Garcia de Benabarre has painted me [in the] year ----"). The date has been rubbed out, but at least now our paintings can be identified with an artist: Pere (Pedro) Garcia de Benabarre.

The name Benabarre refers to a town, located in the Aragonese province of Huesca, and following medieval custom, it probably denotes the artist's birthplace. If one considers, for a moment, that the works by our artist examined up to this point have come from the Catalan province of Lérida, which borders on Huesca, then the assumption of Pere Garcia's origins seems perfectly logical. This is borne out even further by the fact that in the parish church of Benabarre itself, there exists a painting which seems to conform to the style of the S. Michael and the Belcaire Virgin.

This is a representation of the Annunciation. It is much mutilated, yet enough remains to discern its basic qualities. Here is the same flattened space, tiled floor and use of brocades in the bedspread and prie-dieu before the Virgin, characteristics which are most prevalent in the Belcaire and Lérida paintings. The faces, with their high brows, straight noses and eyes with prominent whites, are very similar to the visages of the Belcaire Virgin or the S. Michael. The style in this panel is more linear, perhaps explained by placing the painting in a more youthful phase of the artist's career. Also, one must remember that painting in this region during the era of the International Gothic Style — the first half of the fifteenth century — was predominantly linear and calligraphic. Some explanation for a change in style between the An-







nunciation from Benabarre and the Lérida panels may be found if we examine the sole document which refers to our painter.

In the year 1455, Pere Garcia de Benabarre signed a contract with the widow of the painter Bernat Martorell. The latter had died three years before, leaving his wife and a son as yet too young to take over the trade of his father. Since Martorell was the foremost painter in Barcelona during the second quarter of the century, it is not surprising that his death left many commissions unfinished. Martorell's widow had already negotiated with one artist, Miquel Nadal, to head the shop, but they had soon quarreled. Pere Garcia agreed to take over responsibility of the atelier for five years beginning in 1456, to finish all commissions contracted for by the Martorell shop, in return for which he was to pocket half of the money paid for these paintings. In addition, he was given leave to finish any work of his own outside of Barcelona which remained uncompleted.

This is the only document we have referring to Pere Garcia, but there is no reason to suspect that the alliance with the Martorells was not an harmonious one. There is artistic evidence of his presence in Barcelona in a number of works, presumably those carried out in the Martorell shop. Most substantial of these, stylistically, are several panels of a retable dedicated to Ss. Catherine and Clara in the Cathedral.

Most of the other panels of this altar were executed, presumably earlier, by Miquel Nadal, and some, perhaps later, by an Aragonese artist, Juan de la Abadía. In the episode of the Cutting of S. Clara's Hair (fig. 5), the hand of Pere Garcia is quite evident. Crowded into a rather haphazardly defined ecclesiastical interior is a group of townspeople and monks. S. Clara kneels, holding a candle in her hand, while S. Francis cuts off her hair. The other figures look at her or at each other. These personages are somewhat smaller than those in the narrative panels from S. Juan del Mercado, but the facial types are the same. One might compare, for example, the man at the extreme left with Herod, or the kneeling ladies with Salomé. The woman in the wimple resembles the Benabarre Virgin.

This altarpiece, done in Barcelona, could well explain where Pere Garcia acquired his increased chiaroscuro. During the 1450's, the most prominent painter in the Catalan capital was Jaume Huguet, an artist whose style is more or less a monumentalization and cohesion of Martorell's manner. It would have been inevitable that Pere Garcia would have known Huguet's works.\*



Figure 5. Cutting of S. Clara's Hair. Panel from *retablo* of Ss. Clara and Catherine. Cathedral of Barcelona.

After his time with the Martorells ran out, Pere Garcia de Benabarre probably settled in Lérida. This is attested to by the numerous *retables* in his style which occur throughout the provinces of Lérida and Huesca. They are of varying quality, since much of his work seems to have been executed by his workshop, and the unfortunate result is that many degenerate into little more than folk art, but those executed by Pere Garcia's hand attain a very high artistic level. I would suggest that it was at this time, after 1461, that the *Bellcaire Virgin* and the *S. Juan del Mercado* panels were executed. The *S. Michael*, then, is a work of Pere Garcia's mellow maturity.

Judith Berg Sobré  
University of Oregon

\*Chandler Post, in his *History of Spanish Painting*, Vol. VII, complicated the problem of Pere Garcia by attributing the *Ss. Clara and Catherine* panels, among others, to the "S. Quirce Master." I see no such stylistic discrepancies.

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# FENWAY COURT

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## CHINESE SCULPTURE - III

**I**N THE DUTCH ROOM in front of Zurbarán's *A Doctor of Law* is a Chinese bronze from about 1100 B.C. (Figure 1), the oldest piece in the museum collection. It was recommended to Mrs. Gardner by Dr. Denman W. Ross, a Harvard professor of fine arts, and was purchased from Parish-Watson & Company of New York in December 1922. The information about the vase given at the time of purchase was that it was discovered in an ancient well at Wu-ch'ang, capital of Hupei Province, on the Yang-tze. Prof. Umehara, a noted Japanese archeologist who visited the museum in January 1929, immediately noticed this bronze vessel, and introduced it in his massive seven-volume work, *Ancient Chinese Bronzes in European and American Collections*, published in 1933. Prof. Max Loehr of Harvard University, who recently visited the museum, dated it as a Shang piece from the twelfth to eleventh century B.C.

This slender bronze vessel called *ku* has three sections divided by two zones of transverse grooves. The upper section with a flaring lip is plain, while the two lower sections are decorated with rows of squared spirals of different sizes. The spirals are known as *lei-wen*, literally, "thunder patterns." The peculiar lanceolated designs, in combinations of six, four, and two, have been explained to be representing the winds. Right beneath the two rows of spirals at the top of the lower section is a narrow band consisting of two rows of large and small hooks in confronting pairs. All these highly conventionalized designs appear as a mere ground filling because of eight large studs which represent the eyes of a mythological monster, *t'ao-t'ieh*. The two pairs of eyes of the *t'ao-t'ieh* with hooked tear ducts appear on the slightly swelling middle sections with the mold joins between each pair. The two sections divided by these

joins are symmetrical, while the lower section consists of four identical sections with the left eye of the *t'ao-t'ieh* on each.

The bottom of this *ku* is set high, as all *ku* vessels are, within the narrow central section between the middle decor and the lower band of grooves. The four cruciform perforations are seen between the flanges of the lower band. Some *ku* have two or four crosses, while others have none. Some crosses are perforated, while others are filled in partially or solidly with metal. Opinion varies among experts concerning the purpose of these crosses. Some think that the cruciform perforations are the imprint of the devices used to keep the upper and lower core of the mold in proper alignment. Others think that the vertical arms of the crosses kept the core in position and the horizontal arms allowed the craftsmen to detect whether the two adjacent mold sections had been rightly assembled. Dr. Rutherford John Gettens, author of *The Freer Chinese Bronzes II* (Washington, D.C., 1969), concludes the chapter on the cross-like perforations in *ku* thus: "These crosses are truly enigmatic."

The Gardner *ku* is similar to that of the Freer Gallery (Accs. No. 11.51, reproduced in *The Freer Chinese Bronzes I*, Plate 7) in its size, style, and chronology; and its design is almost identical with that of the *ku* in the collection of Dr. Paul Singer (Figure 2).

The *ku* is a type of sacrificial vessel used in ancient China during the Shang (?1766-?1122 B.C.) and Chou (?1122-256 B.C.) dynasties. With the rise of city-states, particularly in the An Yang area, religion became subtly intermingled with politics and kings became the mediators between the ancestor-gods and men. Bronze vessels of various types were used in the ceremonies to reserve loyalty to the kings as well as in religious rituals through which they communed with the spirits of their ancestors. The style and design of these bronze vessels changed with dynasties, yet the same mythological creature, *t'ao-t'ieh* is present, either as a whole or a part, on almost all the vessels. In ancient China, long before Buddhism came in from India and Lao-tze and Confucius founded their religions, the *t'ao-t'ieh* stood for an embodiment of and a warning against the vices of sensuality and avarice. It is not known whether the *t'ao-t'ieh* represents any specific animal or not, but it usually has a huge belly and a thin face with huge, sharp eyes. A modern reproduction of the entire *t'ao-t'ieh* mask is seen on the principal tier of the gilt bronze incense burner in the Room of Early Italian Paintings (Figure 4). It is a recent copy of an archaic bronze vessel in the form known as *fang-ting*. This particular vessel has two handles rising from the rim at the narrow ends, and eight projecting, vertical dentated ribs. On the upper tier are a





Figure 1. *Ku*, Shang dynasty. H. 10½ in. (0.266 m.), Diam. 6⅛ in. (0.156 m.), Wt. 2 lbs., 7 oz. (1.114 kg.). Gardner Museum, Inv. No. M21529.



*Figure 2. Ku, Shang dynasty. Courtesy of Dr. Paul Singer, New Jersey.*





Figure 3. Base of Figure 1.

confronted pair of birds. They were originally taken from the upper part of the *t'ao-t'ieh* mask. Both the mask and the birds are in relief on the fret ground. The legs show a scroll pattern with a boss in the middle. The bronze original of this object was used in cooking the sacrificial food, as the *ku* was used for the libation of the sacrificial wine.

Another recent copy of the ancient ritual vessel for cooking is displayed in the same gallery (Figure 5). It is an incense burner executed in form of *li-ting*. The rounded body with two loop handles rising from the lip stands on three plain cylindrical legs. The bowl is plain except for a band of the *k'uei* dragon design interspaced by nine large bosses. It is a conventionalized design of an animal that often appears around vessels in bands of varying widths. It is said to have developed from the *t'ao-t'ieh* mask as the bird design had. This vessel has in one side near the rim an inscription in intaglio comprising one pictograph, "fish," and two characters, "fu-ting" (Father Ting).





Figure 4. Incense burner in form of *fang-ting*, late 18th century. H. (the bronze only) 10 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (0.51 m.). Gardner Museum, Inv. No. M15W19.





Figure 5. Incense burner in form of *li-ting*, late 18th century. H. (the bronze only)  $9\frac{3}{8}$  in. (0.245 m.), Diam. 8 in. (0.205 m.), Gardner Museum, Inv. No. M15w18.

Many of the ancient ceremonial bronzes bear inscriptions inside the vessel or the base. These may be one or as many as a hundred characters. Inscriptions have contributed immeasurably to the study of ceremonial bronzes first begun in the eleventh century under the guise of epigraphy. The inscription and the design of this vessel are after the Shang style, while the vessel looks similar to that of the early Chou dynasty, thus presenting a problem of anachronism. In addition, the uneven roundness of the vessel makes it clear that this is a poor copy made out of an old mold. On the underside is a triangular ribbing that connects the legs and the center, which is similar to the Freer *ting* No. 46.4 (cf. *The Freer Chinese Bronzes II*, Figure 53). These incense burners in the forms of *fang-ting* and *li-ting* have teakwood covers decorated with jade knobs and teakwood stands.

The above-mentioned *ku* is one of the few fine specimens of Oriental art in the Gardner collection. Dr. Ross, who recommended it to Mrs. Gardner, was an artist and a Harvard professor in fine arts in the days when no courses were given in Oriental art. It was Ernest F. Fenollosa, the first curator of the Asiatic Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, who was the stimulus for Ross's Oriental collecting and they, in turn, influenced Bernard Berenson, who acquired three exceptional pieces for Mrs. Gardner (cf. *Fenway Court*, Vol. III, Nos. 1 & 3).

YASUKO HORIOKA

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# FENWAY COURT

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## A NAMBAN CHEST

MRS. GARDNER'S LAST TRIP to Europe was made in 1906. Among the things she bought was a lacquered chest with mother-of-pearl inlay (Figures 1 and 2), acquired from Moisé della Torre and Co. of Venice. The chest is made of wood and its surface has been lacquered in black using the *hiramakié* (smooth surface decoration) process and dusted in silver, now tarnished. There are forty-eight crests of six different patterns on the sides and front of the chest and on the lid. The back of the chest has a vine design (Figure 4). Mother-of-pearl is inlaid in the crests, in the diamond patterns on the edges, and in some of the vine leaves. The inside is lacquered in plain black.

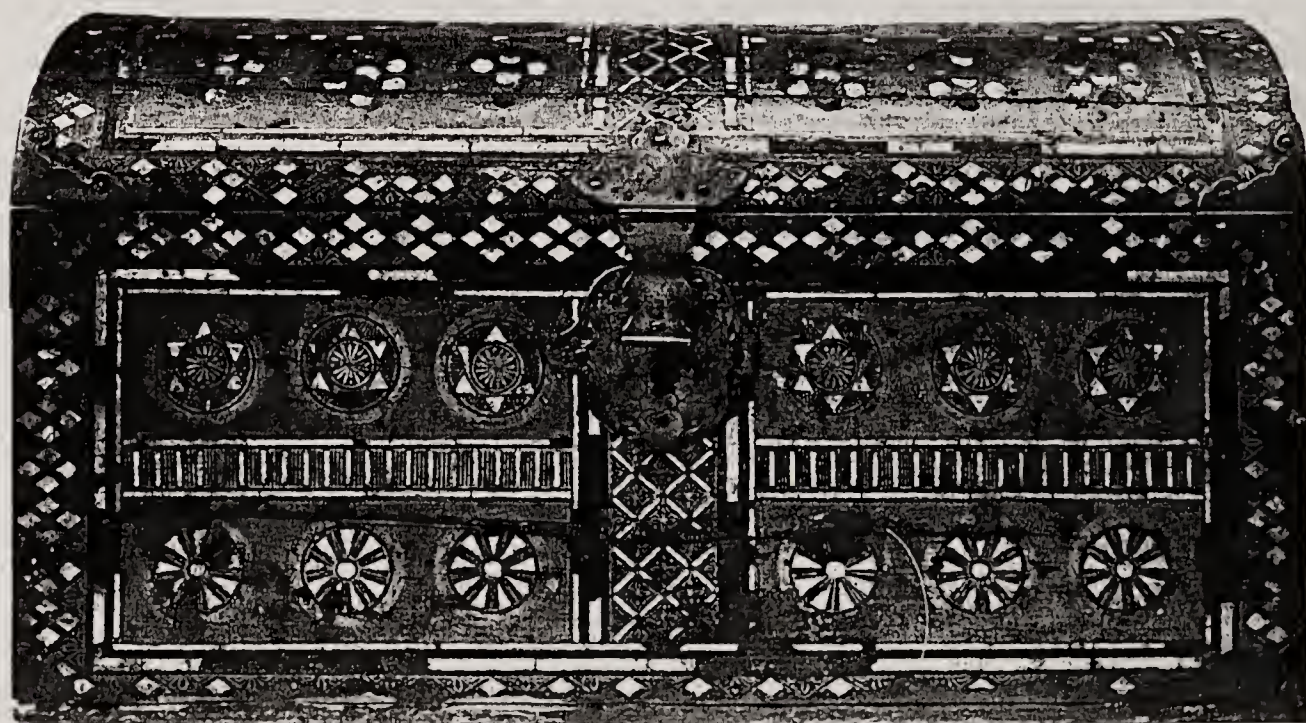
This Namban chest is representative of the lacquered products made from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century. Namban means southern barbarians and was the term used by the Han tribe from Central China to refer to the Chinese in the southern part of the country. The Japanese adopted the term early in the sixteenth century to refer to Europeans, especially the Portuguese and Spaniards who were arriving by way of the Cape of Good Hope. In 1543 a group of Portuguese pioneers was shipwrecked off the Kyūshū coast, the first western contact with the island. In 1549 Fr. Francis Xavier, the Jesuit missionary from Spain, visited Japan from his headquarters in Goa on the Indian coast, marking the introduction of Catholicism into Japan. For nearly a century after these two events, European merchants and missionaries brought Western ideas and objects to the East. In Japan, this resulted in many interesting pieces of both religious and secular art.

Crests are not new in Japanese art. Long ago they first appeared on





*Figure 1.* Namban chest, middle 17th century. H. 1 ft. 1/2 in., L. 1 ft. 9 3/4 in., W. 10 1/3 in. (.33 x .555 x .26 m.). Gardner Museum, Inv. No. F26w6.



*Figure 2.* Front view of Figure 1.





Figure 3. Bottom of Figure 1.

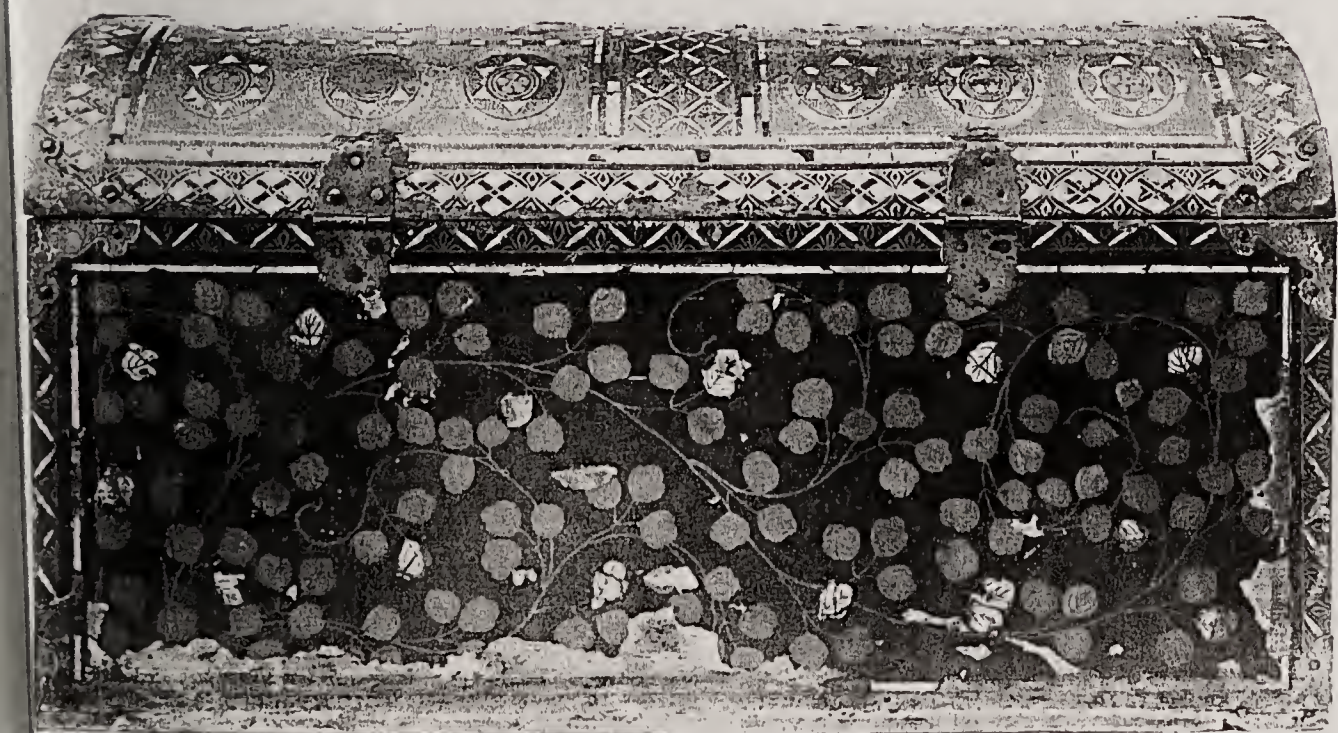


Figure 4. Back view of Figure 1.



flags and banners, and on carriages. Their definite origin is not known, but crests have been used to represent clans and families in Japan. All the crests on the Gardner chest reflect the traditional motifs of Japanese crests. The symmetrical rows of crests bordered and divided by strips of geometrical designs create a gay and exotic effect which must have attracted the merchants from foreign lands.

The same sun crests and star crests appear on a chest of drawers at the Ōsaka Museum of Namban Art (Figure 5) and the central band of the Gardner chest is similar to that of a Tokyo National Museum chest, both in style and in design (Figure 6).

One indication of the date derives from an inscription on a board in the chest which was used for some prior purpose. Chūnosuke Niino, a sculptor who was at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston from February 1909 to March 1910, while the collections of Chinese and Japanese art were being installed in the present building, wrote to Mrs. Gardner that there was "an inscription on the bottom of the box, saying 'Kan'ei Shinsen' (new coin) etc. It seems to me that, judging it by Japanese history (see below), this box was made when the Tokugawa Government purchased the Roman vessel in 1606 A.D., and was used to send to Rome the gold coins which paid for the vessel. Extracts from Japanese history: Emperor, Goyōzei. Shōgun, Tokugawa Ieyasu. In April of Keichō 11th (1606) a Roman vessel came to Japan, and was bought by the Government. In December of the same year a new coin 'Kan'ei Tsūhō' was first made, and 'Eirakusen' was discarded."

Miss Martha Boyer, who included a photograph and description of the Gardner chest in her superb book, *Japanese Export Lacquers from the 17th Century in the National Museum of Denmark* (Copenhagen, 1959, p. 64, pl. XXVII), accepted Niino's letter, which she quoted, adding that "Roman" should be interpreted as Portuguese. Unfortunately she was not aware of the correction made by Kojiro Tomita, now curator emeritus of the Asiatic Department of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, who catalogued the Oriental objects in the Gardner Museum in 1927: "... The first Kan'ei coins were issued in 1636, and for this reason the chest has no bearing upon the purchase of the ship in 1606. Most likely the chest was made on the order of a Dutch merchant and taken to Europe in the middle of the 17th century. ..."

Although illegible, the Japanese writing which appears on the underside of the chest (Figure 3), both vertically and horizontally in different





Figure 5. Small chest of drawers. H. 1 ft. 1/5 in., L. 1 ft. 1 1/2 in., W. 10 in. (.31 x .345 x .255 m.). Courtesy of Osaka Museum of Namban Art.



Figure 6. Namban chest. H. 6 in., L. 8 4/5 in., W. 5 1/10 in. (.152 x .225 x .13 m.). Courtesy of Tokyo National Museum.



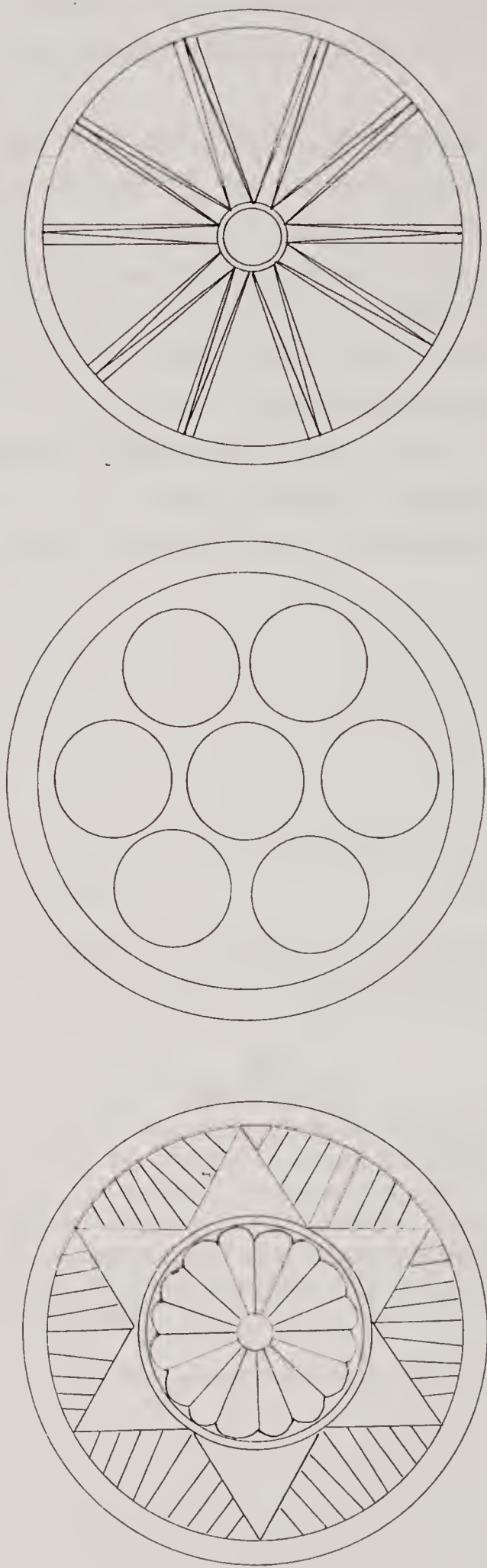
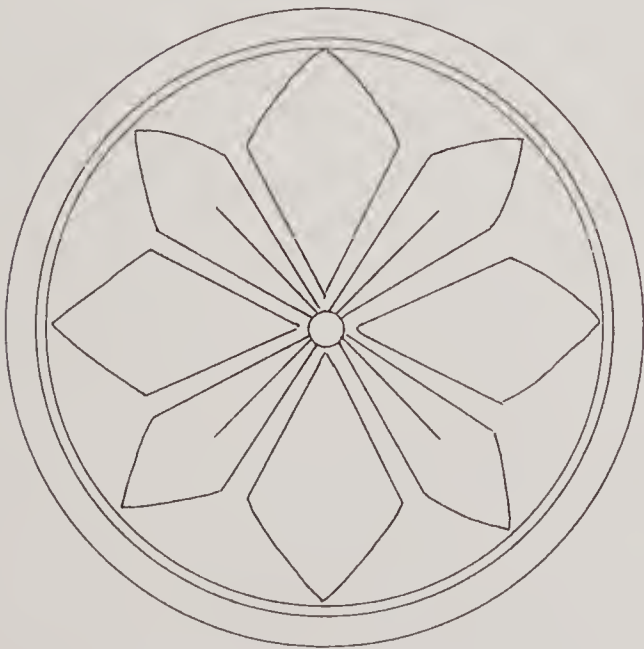
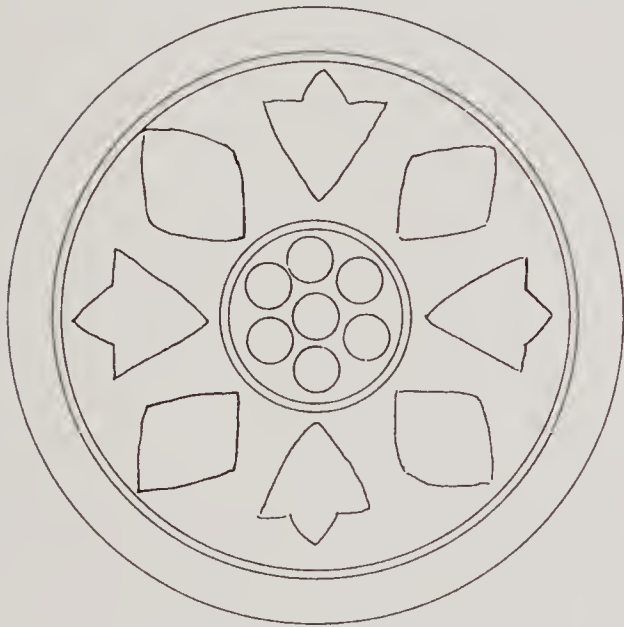
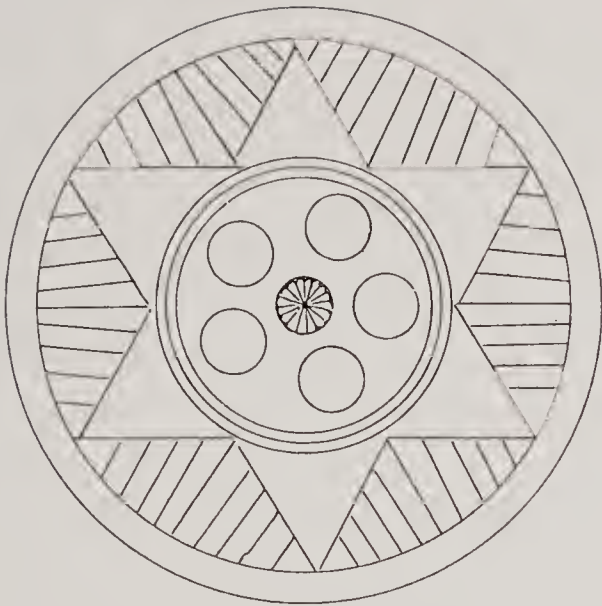


Figure 7. Six crest patterns of Figure 1.





ink tones, suggests that the wood board was originally used for a different purpose. Cabinet makers often preferred old boards for furniture to avoid shrinkage.

Active trading with Portugal, Spain and England came to an end in 1639 when the *Shōgun*, ruler of the nation, ordered all Japanese ports closed. Dutch merchants continued their trade during the period of nationwide isolation, using an artificial island built in Nagasaki harbor. Numerous lacquered chests must have been made for export purposes, but only a few exist today. They differ in size, but they all share two common characteristics: a curved, hinged lid and mother-of-pearl inlay. As there are European coffers and larger boxes with similar lids and mother-of-pearl inlay, it is the intricate mingling of Western and Eastern taste that gives Namban art an independent chapter in the history of Japanese art.

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